

**STREET CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA : WORKING TOWARDS
SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL SOLUTIONS**

by

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**submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the subject

SOCIO-EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR : DR E. PRINSLOO

NOVEMBER 1998

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the following individuals and organisations :

1. The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development (HSRC, South Africa) towards this research. The opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the researcher and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.
2. The Reverend John Green, Floyd Dlangamandla and other members of the street child committee for their assistance and cooperation.
3. The boys at Khayaletu for being willing subjects, and I trust that this study will contribute to their benefit.
4. Dr. E. Prinsloo for her guidance and encouragement.
5. Esme Powys for her editorial work.
6. Labby Ramrathan, Faculty of Education, University of Durban - Westville for his advice.
7. My wife Sharina, daughters Swasthi and Yajna for their support and assistance which made this study possible.

K. Anirudhra

1998

DECLARATION

Street Children in South Africa : Working towards Socio-Educational Solutions

Master of Education 1998

I, *Kamraj Anirudhra*, hereby declare that this dissertation has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university, that it represents my own work both in conception and in execution, and that all sources that I have used and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete reference.

Signed by me *Kamraj Anirudhra* on this 30 day of November , 1998

ABSTRACT

The aim of this investigation was threefold : to determine origins and perceptions of the street child problem nationally and internationally ; to explore the way in which children experience life in the streets ; and to devise strategies to enable these children to develop optimally.

Literature indicates that the street child phenomenon is a global issue that presents many challenges. It is a socio-educational problem precipitated by multi-factorial events in the home, community and by children's personality attributes. Street children experience rejection, suffering, shame and anxiety. Deprivation of an environment conducive to positive development leads to maladjustment, anti-social behaviour and marginalisation.

The empirical research was undertaken by means of semi-structured interviews conducted among fourteen children of the Khayaletu shelter and by administering questionnaires in the community of Port Shepstone.

The findings culminate in recommendations for suitable assistance programmes and strategies to handle the problem in South Africa.

K. Anirudhra

1998

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION, PROBLEM ANALYSIS, AIM OF STUDY AND RESEARCH PROGRAMME

1.1 Introduction and Overview of the Problem

If the headlines in the morning mainstream print media screamed the following headline *80 million children worldwide face doom* perhaps then mass hysteria would erupt worldwide and tangible efforts at dealing with the problem would overcome the malaise which pervades societal attitudes and government policies which are supposed to assist the estimated 80 million street children on our planet (Swart 1988 a : 32 - 41).

Against the above background it is only recently that there is an international awakening to the problem of street children as reflected in the increasing literature on the topic accompanied by relevant NGO projects (Swart 1990 a : 28 - 41). Furthermore, it would not be surprising to discover articles on street children in the Reader's Digest (1989 : 19-24) and even Municom Forum (March 1996) where the latter is a municipal newsletter.

The phenomenon street children is a cause for concern because children who are compelled to choose the street as their habitat is nothing short of a human tragedy. When children have to contend with the hostilities presented by street life in the form of degradation, neglect, hunger, sexual abuse, disease and harassment instead of love, comfort, security and care, then the very existence of society could be threatened. This sentiment is expressed by Rajendra Pandey (1991 : 2) when he declares that : "It is a national and international responsibility to enhance and preserve this supreme national asset—the children. It is the bounden duty of a nation to ensure that every child is adequately housed, clothed, fed and trained so that it is capable of enjoying the pleasures of childhood."

An interesting aspect of Pandey's statement is that he perceives *education* as an important criterion towards alleviating the problems of street children.

The street child problem is contemporary, spills over numerous geographical borders, penetrates many cultures and evokes various emotional responses. Consequently perceptions towards the problem could vary and in some instances be deliberately distorted for selfish motives.

For example etiological factors which contribute towards the street child problem in South Africa are usually urbanisation patterns (Schurink et al. 1993 :14), financial problems, poor relationships with parents (Richter 1988 : 12), political unrest (Richter 1989 : 2), polygamy (Richter 1988 :13), failed school careers (Schàrf et al. 1990 : 270) and uncontrolled population growth (Van Zyl 1994 : 12). This does not imply that there are *universal global etiological factors*. There are unique differences in which children find themselves in the different countries (Schurink et al. 1993 : 13).

In South Africa where the problem is relatively new and usually more prominent among the black population groups in many centres (Swart 1988 b : 104), it may give rise to the misconception that the street child problem is a racial problem with its origins in poverty exclusively (Van Zyl 1994 : 9).

Another misconception which emerged during field studies was the belief that street children comprise of males exclusively. This is far from the truth because street girls do exist but to a lesser degree than street boys. The former are less visible than their male counterparts (Swart 1988 b : 100-101).

Such misinformed perceptions lead to misdirected conclusions and unfounded accusations such as placing blame on the previous regime of South Africa. Such responses are unscientific and should be ignored lest they interfere with the nature and purpose of the study.

Where the nature of the study is concerned, it is aimed at gathering reliable information in a responsible manner. Consequently it is justifiable to ignore inappropriate, emotional responses such as placing blame for the phenomenon street children in South Africa on a past regime.

Where the purpose of the study is concerned, it is geared towards exploring possible educational strategies aimed at reducing the number of street children.

Accordingly an accurate perception of the problem is necessary in order to yield successful preventative strategies aimed at addressing the street child problem in South Africa.

1.2 Analysis of the Problem

The phenomenon street children is not confined to South Africa or our time. It is believed that during the Ancient Greek Period between 800BC-338 BC parents abandoned young children in public places (Boswell 1988 : 84-85).

Ancient Romans during the period 750 BC-530 BC also behaved in a manner similar to the Ancient Greeks. Like the Ancient Greeks the Ancient Romans abandoned their unwanted babies in specific places in Rome so that people could take pity on them and adopt the rejected infants (Van Zyl 1994 : 5). In these instances the reasons for rejection of their babies were either poverty, the preservation of family wealth or vanity (where the Athenians placed a high value on physical fitness and attractiveness) (Van Zyl 1994 : 3-4).

- When the phenomenon of children living and working on streets is considered, it is an old one but relatively new, in a South African context. As such the possibility exists that it may not be completely understood. This has many implications, for example expert's perceptions of etiological factors could be limited. Consequently, intervention programmes would be inadequate. This state of affairs is echoed by Maree (1991 : 33), when he declares that the street child problem in South Africa is on the increase due to township violence, unchecked population growth and increasing poverty. A similar sentiment is expressed in the HSRC working document on street children. "Welfare groups came to realise during the last five years, that the special needs and situations of these unfortunates demanded special modes of caring and providing. And today, I hope and trust, ushers in a further phase, in that the presence of these children on our streets are not merely seen as a social problem, but *also and truly as a special educational problem*" (Schurink et al. 1993 : 2).

If one agrees with the above then one must accept that although the problem is not new, it is also present in complex and modern societies and is generated by a different set of etiological factors as compared to previous eras. This in itself calls for ongoing investigations so that the dynamics of the problem and its changing nature may always be understood.

It is refreshing to observe that the street child phenomenon is being given increasing attention by educationists and others in South Africa as seen by the efforts of the following : Jill Swart (1988-1990), Linda Richter (1988-1989), Prentice (1992) and Schurink (1993).

Generally, street children because of their unconventional life on the streets, are labelled as “stupid”, “lacking ideas and vision for the future”. Research has shown that such perceptions of street children are incorrect (Swart 1990 b : 5 - 7). Such circumstances imply that pedagogues should make serious attempts to understand street children and also assist them in an appropriate manner. This may be radical to the pedagogue’s existing views and expectations. However, this may be necessary so that the street child could be assisted towards “*authentic maturity*” with the appropriate survival skills.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Generally it is accepted that the behaviour patterns of street children are detrimental to themselves as well as others. Consequently there is consensus among experts that leading an unprotected life is harmful to growing children and therefore, the street child phenomenon should be addressed.

In an attempt at addressing the problem of street children research needs to be undertaken with the intention of understanding the phenomenon so that suitable programmes may be designed accordingly.

Keeping in mind that qualitative research is naturalistic-phenomenologically orientated, the problem statement was question driven by issues such as : What is the nature, extent and cause of the phenomenon street children? What are the educational aspirations of street children? What education have the street children received and what educational assistance will they receive in future? To what extent are communities sensitive to the problem? What educational and other resources are available for street children?

1.4 Delimiting the Area of Investigation

This research project will be limited to the Port Shepstone area in Kwa-Zulu Natal because :

- (i) The magnitude of the street child problem in South African cities is on the increase and smaller towns such as Port Shepstone escape the attention of authorities and experts. In conducting such a study in such a locality it would serve to emphasize that the street child problem is not restricted to metropolitan areas like Durban, Stellenbosch, Johannesburg or Pretoria only but affects the whole spectrum of South African society.
- (ii) In larger cities street child committees have access to a wide range of resources such as academics and companies who may assist the committees. Unfortunately in towns such as Port Shepstone such resources are lacking and this impacts negatively on the quality of the assistance programme on offer. Consequently these circumstances present the locality as a fertile research site.
- (iii) Port Shepstone has a street child committee in existence and as such was considered to be an opportune research site.
- (iv) Keeping in mind that Port Shepstone has a unique geographical character in that it is a financial and administrative centre for numerous sprawling suburbs as well as being a border town of the former Transkei it was regarded as a necessary exercise to investigate whether refugee children contributed to the street child population in Port Shepstone.
- (v) Finally the prospective study was considered to be of value in the future programmes of *Khayaletu* in that it would yield recommendations which would help identify shortcomings and provide necessary solutions.

1. *Khayaletu* : refers to a shelter for street children located in Settler's Park within the central business district of Port Shepstone.

1.5 Aim of the Study

Aims are regarded as factors which give direction to a study. Furthermore aims could also be used to justify the purpose of a study, and in many instances aims are an interaction of both elements, that is they give direction and justify purpose. In this case aims are perceived as all these as well as the goals of this study. The aims of this study are :

- to place the street child phenomenon in its socio-educational context.
- to identify social dynamics which act as precursors to the phenomenon.
- to identify educational dynamics which act as precursors to the phenomenon.
- to explore the quality of life of street children.
- to investigate the educational needs of street children.
- to explore perceptions, aspirations and survival skills of street children.
- to ascertain community knowledge, perceptions and attitudes towards street children.
- to provide recommendations for future assistance strategies.

The above objectives are intended to focus on the street child problem in South Africa with the intention of working towards socio-educational solutions. Consequently it is intended that the knowledge derived would answer questions such as :

- (i) Whether there is an illusion by children that there is a better life on the streets instead of the home or the school?
- (ii) Whether children are not receiving all the attention that they deserve and the phenomenon "street children" is a symptom of a misdirected parental educational style and / or school education system?
- (iii) Whether children have become disillusioned with school education and diffuse out of schools / homes and end up on streets?
- (iv) Whether the entire school system is unable to cater for the needs of the nation's various cultures, abilities and potential of pupils?
- (v) Whether the street child problem is a result of multi-factorial consequences in the home, school, child and society?

1.6 Research Method

In keeping with its explorative nature the topic lent itself readily to qualitative research. As mentioned previously the aim of the study is to describe participants' individual and collective social actions, some of their beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. Accordingly, a variety of techniques will be employed such as purposeful sampling, random sampling, participant observation, ethnographic interviews, questionnaires as well as document and artefact perusal.

1.6.1 Relevant Literature

A comprehensive study of local and international literature on street children will be undertaken on a continuous basis.

1.6.2 Documentary Sources

Official documents from the Khayaletu Project and newspaper reports on the phenomenon will be consulted.

1.6.3 Ethnographic Interviews

Interviews will be conducted with information rich participants such as the chairman of the street child committee in Port Shepstone as well as the street coordinator.

1.6.4 Participant Observation

Through the street coordinator it will be possible to make contact with street children and gain first hand information on the lifestyle of the subjects.

1.6.5 Survey Research

Institutions such as schools, business places, individuals at home, professionals and people on the street will be approached to ascertain their knowledge, perceptions and attitudes towards street children.

1.7 Empirical Research Method

The empirical research will be conducted in two parts because two distinct aspects are to be explored. In the first instance a random survey will be conducted in the Port Shepstone community. The reason for this survey is to ascertain public knowledge and attitude towards street children.

In the second empirical study fourteen street children, a social worker, a street coordinator, policeman and the chairman of the street child committee will be interviewed. While structured interviews will be utilized during interviews with the street children, qualitative interviews of the informal interview format will be used during interviews with the information rich informants.

During the informal conversation interviews, questions will not be predetermined, but is expected to emerge during the natural course of the interview. Such a data gathering exercise is usually relaxed and conversational.

The confidentiality of informants and street children who participated in this study are protected by the use of appropriate functions in case of informants and pseudonyms in the case of street children.

The reason for choosing Port Shepstone to carry out these studies was to explore the nature and scope of the street child problem in a 'particular type of setting'. Port Shepstone is a small town with limited employment opportunities as compared with large cities. However, in a small town there is more cohesive family and community dynamics. This means that parents usually have more contact time with their children due to the closer proximity of work and other services and the community is close knit. However, like most South African cities Port Shepstone is surrounded by numerous former black settlements. Under the circumstances it was vital to investigate whether the street child problem would reflect a similar pattern as compared with the other cities.

1.8 Site Selection

The Khayaletu shelter for street children was chosen as a suitable site because it has a well documented history and its activities offered a rich source of relevant information for the study. The shelter offers assistance to street children in the Port Shepstone and surrounding area.

The shelter was opened in October 1996 in the Settlers Park which ironically, is a neglected park in the central business district of Port Shepstone.

The street co-ordinator, lives with the street children in the shelter which is maintained by the Khayaletu Project Committee.

1.9 Elucidation of Concepts

The phenomenon street children is explored from a socio-educational perspective. Keeping this in mind, the following concepts are used in the respective contexts :

Abandoned children : These are children of the street who have severed all ties with a biological family and are entirely on their own in respect of material and psychological survival (Pandey 1991 : 19).

Children of the street : Refers to children who live literally permanently on the streets (Richter 1988 : 7).

Children on the street : Refers to children who are temporarily on the street perhaps to generate income for their families and as such maintain familial ties. (Richter 1988 : 7).

Child at risk : any child who by virtue of disadvantaged socio-economic or other circumstances, may in the future face the possibility of being forced to choose the streets as his habitat.

Homeless Children : these are children of the street who have severed familial ties and as such do not have a house or dwelling where familial togetherness is experienced.

Place of Residence : place of congregation such as a street, unoccupied dwelling or waste land.

Shelter : it is a place that offers temporary residential care for street children.

Socio-education : refers to people's social lives in an educative and educational context. "It is the field of study which is responsible for the guidance of the child with regard to living adequately with others on all social levels and in all social relationships and situations" (Pretorius 1988 : 4).

Socio-educational implications : The street child usually experiences a great amount of shame, anxiety, suffering and rejection. Such children are inevitably deprived of an environment conducive to their development leading to maladjustment and anti-social behaviour. If professionals such as school social workers perform essential roles and functions in addressing the concerns of street children by identifying, assessing and developing strategies for intervention at individual (child), familial (home), institutional (school) and community level then perhaps the street child can benefit from an environment which is conducive to his balanced development thereby making it possible for him/her to become a responsible, happy and well nurtured child who has a future in society.

Street Children : Children aged between six and sixteen for whom the street, inclusive of unoccupied dwellings and vacant land has become their habitual abode or source of livelihood or both and as a result are inadequately protected and supervised by responsible adults (Richter 1988 : 12).

1.10 Research Programme

This study is intended to examine numerous aspects of the street child phenomenon in South Africa.

In chapter two which is entitled "Street Children - The Phenomenon", attention will be focused on key aspects affecting the lives of street children throughout the ages.

Chapter three will explore the family circumstances of the street child. In this chapter aspects relating to the traditional familial patterns and their evolution into westernised models as well as the implications of these changes on child rearing will be investigated.

In chapter four the nature and extent of the street child phenomenon in South Africa will be examined with attention focused on economic factors, familial factors and societal factors as causes of the street child problem.

In chapter five the empirical research design will be discussed

Chapter six will contain the results and report of a random survey to determine public perception and attitudes towards the street child problem. This survey will be conducted in the community of Port Shepstone. The results of the second empirical research will be presented in this chapter .

In chapter seven which is entitled “ Resumé of Findings, Recommendations, Implications and Suggestions for Future Research”, there will be a synthesis of the entire report. As the title suggests a resumé of the findings will be followed by recommendations for a suitable assistance programme and strategies which will then culminate in implications and suggestions for future research.

The street child problem is an issue that receives wide media coverage in South Africa. In Addendum A the researcher will explore the treatment that the street child problem receives in the printed media.

CHAPTER TWO

STREET CHILDREN - THE PHENOMENON

2.1 Introduction

“ They are the bad conscience of a model of urban development that has collapsed ; of an urbanisation process that has shattered traditional structures. They loiter in the streets, pilfer, clean windscreens, beg or sell cigarettes. At night when the cinemas close they form groups and sleep wherever they can find shelter. They are pursued by police, often manipulated by them, and frequently end up in prison. They are between seven and fifteen years old and have become known as *street children*”

(Cerrans 1992 :11). Cerrans is indeed correct in expressing these sentiments because the street child phenomenon has become a global problem and as such has attracted much needed attention from government agencies, Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) and academics.

Today the phenomenon is better known due to relevant worldwide research. Unfortunately although the phenomenon is now receiving attention, the number of street children is by no means diminishing. In 1986 Agnelli in Schurink et al.(1993 : 12), estimated the number of street children worldwide to be 80 million. In 1992 Cerrans in Cerrans (1992 : 11-12) estimated the number to be 300 million and on the increase. These statistics are disturbing and one may comfort oneself in the belief that these statistics could be inaccurate. However, even if the numbers are inaccurate the fact that street children do exist is nothing short of a blight on society. This sentiment is echoed by Cerrans (1992 : 11-12) when he says : “For us the existence of street children indicates moral degradation and the end of traditional values.”

An important aspect of the phenomenon is that the street child population cannot be categorised as one homogeneous group. There are *varieties* of street children who may be classified according to various factors. For example, classification may be executed on the basis of age, sex (male/female), parent-child relations (runaways/throwaways), contact with parents (child of/on street).

Furthermore, the literature review revealed numerous terminology being used to refer to street children such as : “ragpickers” (India), “gamines” (Bogota), “pogey boys” (Philippines), “scugnizzo” (Naples). The South African parallels are “malunde” (those of the street), “malalapipe” (those who sleep in pipes) (Richter 1988) and “strollers” (Schàrf 1986 : 10).

Street children are the natural consequence of urban realities caused by a number of integrated factors. Key etiological factors identified were rapid urbanisation, high levels of unemployment, poverty, family disintegration, familial abuse and violence. Against this background street children must not be perceived as delinquents who need to be disciplined but as victims of “social shock” (caused by rapid urbanisation and social change) who are to be supported (given education and other skills), so that they may also realise their goals or be reintegrated into society. According to a Unicef report in 1993 the number of street children in South Africa was estimated to be approximately ten thousand (Unicef 1993 : 20). This estimate was conservative. In contemporary South Africa, the number of street children is certain to be in excess of ten thousand.

Although the biggest concentration of cases is reportedly in the Witwatersrand area, numbers are rising in all South African cities (Peacock 1989 : 12). Furthermore, the majority of South African street children are black with few or none of the other racial groups represented. The following sample taken by Jill Swart in 1988 is reflective of the South African scenario when she classified 272 Malunde on the streets of Hillbrow, Johannesburg, South Africa :

Unknown	:	32
Coloured	:	8
Indian	:	1
Nguni	:	127 (Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi)
Sotho	:	99 (North and South Sotho, Tswana, Pedi)
Venda	:	2
Tsonga-	:	3
Shangaan	:	
		272

South Africa is a vast country and the phenomenon seems to be relatively evenly distributed across the country as one would gather from the following table:

Total number of street children in the South Africa comprising of , coloured and black, urban and rural boys, and 10% of girls aged 7-16 Total = 9390

Table 2.1

Distributed in the former areas in RSA	
Western Cape	813
Northern Cape	222
Eastern Cape	528
Natal	367
OFS	640
Transvaal	1827
Distributed by area in the former Independent States	
Bophuthatswana	559
Ciskei	303
Transkei	977
Venda	128

(Le Roux 1994 : 69).

The statistics quoted do not account for any white street children in South Africa but, “there are 10 000 white children in 160 state-registered and subsidised children’s homes. In contrast, there are no state administered children’s homes for African children in the urban areas. The 12 existing private homes accommodate just under 1 000 African children” (Le Roux 1994 : 70). Johann Le Roux goes further in his explanation and presents the following logical arguments. “The present ratio of African to White in South Africa is approximately 5 : 1. If the white community produces 10 000 children in need of care, the statistical projection is that there are at least 50 000 black youth in need of care” (Le Roux 1994 : 70).

The negative economic trends after 1994 has led to an increase in the street child population. This has been accompanied by an increase in the activities geared towards addressing the growing street child problem in South Africa. The business world, non-governmental organisations and concerned individuals have initiated assistance programmes that have grown since their inception. Alongside these circumstances there is a perception that the state will deal with the most pressing problems through education because education is the key to social advancement.

Although schools have the potential to make a contribution towards providing the child with a chance to learn how to deal with survival issues there is insufficient resources to allow formal education to contend with all the problems facing society. There is a need for other agencies to become involved in both informal and non-formal education in an endeavour to support the upliftment of socially disadvantaged children. This is necessary because the state on its own is unable to meet the educational need of the nation.

Against the above background it appears that the approach towards addressing the street child problem in South Africa remains unchanged and it is still the non-governmental organisations, individuals and communities that must work creatively towards addressing the street child problem in present day South Africa.

Finally the street child phenomenon in South Africa cannot be explained in a simplistic fashion by ascribing it to isolated etiological factors such as poverty, abuse, family disintegration or the past regime. Furthermore, it would be unrealistic to assume that white street children do not exist in South Africa. A programme broadcast on a South African pay channel featured white girls working on Hillbrow streets. In a follow up programme it was revealed that one street child had been murdered. Considering the information presented on television it would be correct to classify the girls as children of the street.

South Africa is a developing multi-cultural society with its unique circumstances within which the street child phenomenon exists. Under the circumstances the street child phenomenon should always be approached with an open mind if one desires to come to terms with its dynamics.

2.2 Historical Review of Street Children

A historical review of the street child phenomenon, was undertaken with the intention of placing the phenomenon in its historical context and is not intended to provide an evolutionary perspective. Available literature sources suggest that the street child phenomenon has its origins since early times but it has not been sufficiently documented. From the available information the historical review was placed into the following five categories.

2.2.1 The Ancient Greek period (800 BC-338 BC)

“ During this period illegitimate children as well as legitimate female babies were usually abandoned. On occasion even legitimate baby boys were abandoned. The poor abandoned their children in order to escape the financial burden of raising their children, while the wealthy abandoned their children to prevent dilution of their wealth among numerous heirs” (Goodsell 1934 : 107).

Athenians in this period placed a high degree of emphasis on a child's physique, attractiveness and mental capacity. So firmly entrenched was this value that when a child was born with any form of disability it was considered sufficient reason for “rejection” of that child.

According to Plutarch (1967 : 255), as cited by Van Zyl (1994 : 4), the rejection of physically deformed children was also customary among the Spartans who granted the right to live only to the physically perfect.

2.2.2 The Ancient Roman Period (753 BC-530 AD)

“The Ancient Romans also rejected children in the same way as the Ancient Greeks. In contrast to the Greeks, who intended for the abandoned babies to die, the Romans expected someone to find such a baby and take care of it” (Van Zyl 1994 : 5).

According to Boswell (1988 : 110), as cited by Van Zyl (1994 : 4), the general practice was for unwanted babies to be placed in specific places in Rome. People then took pity on the abandoned infants and raised them as adopted children (alumni) or slaves.

Once again the reasons for rejecting children in Ancient Rome like Ancient Greece revolved around financial circumstances.

“These trends soon resulted in high numbers of very young and particularly infant street children in Ancient Rome” (Van Zyl 1994 : 5).

To compound the problem of street children it would seem that the act of child abandonment was an acceptable social practice. Where, “it was perceived as a method of family planning in the absence of contraception” (Boswell 1988 : 103) and secondly it was also perceived as a method of saving children from a life of misery as illustrated in the following statement. “When the poor do not rear children it is because they consider poverty the greatest of evils and do not wish to share it with their children” (Boswell 1988 : 103). Consequently there was no condemnation for such acts, instead it was used as a mechanism to promote and preserve financially motivated ideals of the day.

2.2.3 The Industrial Revolution Period in England

The Industrial Revolution in England during the latter part of the 19th century sparked off an exodus of families including children from rural to urban areas. In keeping with economic and financial demands of the period a “working class child” emerged. Children were perceived as “wage-earners” and “economic assets” because they contributed to the family income (Muncie 1984 : 34).

Children who were unable to find employment in industries passed their time idling or begging on streets. It was not uncommon for children in this category to be ‘thrown out of the home’. The following quotation reflects the fate of unemployed children during this period in England. “Unemployed boys were often sold by their parents to chimney sweeps with girls going to brothel keepers or beggars who would use them as they pleased” (Muncie 1984 : 34).

It is clear that in England the urbanisation patterns and financial hardship precipitated by the Industrial Revolution resulted in children gravitating onto the streets during the 19th century. It was these children whom Charles Dickens depicted in his novel *Oliver Twist*.

2.2.4 The United States and Latin America (19th Century)

In America economic hardship of the 1830's and 1840's caused the emergence of slums. Children from slum areas spilled onto American streets and the term "street Arabs" emerged to describe the street children.

The street children faced dreadful conditions on the streets and were initially ignored by society. However, by the turn of the 19th century indifference gave way to "fear" and condemnation. It was clear that street children were living by their own code of conduct and as such displayed delinquent, amoral and violent behaviour which was threatening the very structure of American society.

By 1870 the street child problem was devastating commercial and residential areas in major American centres. The alarming state of affairs during this period is aptly described by the words of Teeter (1988 : 909) "By 1870 gangs were in control of numbers of streets in Baltimore, Boston, Newark and New Orleans."

Attempts at addressing this problem began during the early 1900's. Research was undertaken in order to evaluate the problem. During the 1960's programmes to assist disadvantaged children were implemented. Initial programmes were designed to improve scholastic achievement and enhance social development. Gradually these programmes improved and at present a holistic approach is adopted where it is policy for the school, the community and the business world to deal jointly with the problem of social disadvantage in American society (Preisseisen 1988 : 29). Contemporary American approach towards assisting disadvantaged children is aptly described by Wall (1996 : 135-144), in the following statement. " *School social workers perform essential roles in addressing the concerns of homeless children and their families. By identifying, assessing and developing strategies for intervening at the individual, familial, institutional, and community levels, school social workers can develop comprehensive educational and social service for this population. They can also provide the leadership in creating and implementing collaborative efforts among a variety of public and private agencies, institutions, and professional associations to enable communities to address more effectively the complex needs of homeless children and their families.*"

At present in the United States there is also the problem of millions of immigrant children. This situation raises the issue of viewing childhood and even the street child problem not only from a developmental perspective but also in an ethnohistorical context. In addition to this, a distinction must be made between the American street child who is fleeing from abusive or neglectful parents and the street youth who commit violent acts of delinquency. However, in keeping with other countries the contemporary street child in the United States also experiences an untenable and erratic lifestyle which is characterised by loneliness, violence and deprivation (Aptekar 1991 : 344).

Circumstances on the American continent vary from country to country. Brazil which has approximately twenty million street children is both, infamous for its death squads that prey on street children (Swart 1990b) and famous for its successful street child programmes such as *Salao de Encontro* and *Pastoral do Menor* (Levenstein 1996 : 47)

In Bogota, Colombia street children can be seen playing between traffic. These children evoke different reactions in Colombian society. Usually the reaction is one of disdain or envy (Aptekar 1991 : 326). In 1984 a popular Colombian journalist described these children as a disease (Aptekar 1991 : 327). In contemporary Colombian society the circumstances of the street child has not improved. Street children in Colombia are still in the midst of a social class and caste struggle, verbally debased in the press, physically abused by the police and even assassinated.

Honduras is a small, impoverished mountainous Latin American country, which has suffered the consequences of neighbours at civil war, devastating hurricanes, corruption, military occupation and a slow economy (Wright, Wittig and Kaminsky 1993 : 81-92).

In common with many Latin American countries Honduras has a large number of street children, mainly in the cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. In the Honduran context as in South Africa the term street child is used to refer to children on the street, children of the street and homeless children as well.

When a comparison is made between street children in Honduras and the United States, it appears that the sex ratios, living and sleeping circumstances, and average age of the *market children* in Honduras are demographically comparable to the *homeless pre-teens* of the United States. It is the homeless adolescents of the United States that are comparable to children *in the street* of Honduras (Wright, Wittig and Kaminsky 1993 : 81-92)

Homeless street children in both Honduras and the United States are often under-fed, abuse drugs, suffer the consequences of disorganised and estranged family life and show exceptional levels of physical illness and mental anguish. However, in Latin America it is the street child who is victimised, occasionally killed by merchants and even by the police. In the United States they kill one another (Wright, Wittig and Kaminsky 1993 : 81-92).

Attempts at addressing the street child problem in Honduras are restricted by a lack of financial and human resources. Against this background there is only one notable intervention programme called *Proyecto Alternativos* which provides health education and social services to street children in Tegucigalpa. Proyecto Alternativos includes the following : a feeding programme, nonformal education, recreation activities and primary health care.

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2. *Market children : this refers to children between four and eighteen who do not attend school but, instead assist parents in the markets .*

2.2.5 The Street Child Problem in Contemporary Vietnam

Vietnam's urban poor like other countries are attracted by the promises of city life, but instead they usually find themselves squatting or living in slums, without basic services such as clean water, adequate sanitation and health care. The inevitable then happens, "most of the children come to the streets in search of income" (Franchet 1996 : 262-263). In Ho Chi Minh City 70 % are considered to be children on the street implying that they maintain regular familial contact while approximately 20-25 % are children of the street while 5-10 % are totally on their own. Furthermore, the ratio of males to females is 10:1 (Franchet 1996 : 262).

The etiological factors in Ho Chi Minh City attributing to the street child problem appears to be urbanisation, illiteracy, poverty, marginalisation (where the beggars and street vendors become cut off from mainstream society).

The response to the street child problem has been slow. "Between 1990-1992 substantial policy changes were clearly evident in Ho Chi Minh City, as some NGO's were allowed to set up projects and although they got tired of fastidious administrative procedures, they were able to work with local social workers" (Franchet 1996 : 263).

From the above it seems that government and international assistance is lacking in Vietnam and as such tangible efforts and programmes at addressing the street child phenomenon is at a rudimentary stage.

2.3 The Street Child Phenomenon in a few African Countries

In Africa, street and working children are reportedly a widespread phenomenon although it is not well documented and reliable statistics are lacking (Schurink et al. 1993 : 14).

As in any other continent, Africa as well has a fair share of street children who are discernible and increasing in number at a rapid pace. A study of street children in urban areas in Namibia revealed them to number approximately 2300 (Tacon 1991 : 1). In Khartoum there are an estimated 20 000 street children and in Nairobi there are 13 600 street children in the Starehe Boy's Centre (Agnelli 1986 : 5).

There has been mixed responses to the street child phenomenon in Africa. In some instances countries such as, Kenya, as early as 1959 has identified and responded to the problem. Other countries such as Botswana and Zimbabwe have attended to it recently (Schurink et al.1993 : 14-15). This attitude is in contrast to that described by Keen (1985 : 3) when he states that "according to African tradition the streets have always played an important role in the lives of young people where meetings and ceremonies are held under the pow-wow tree and traditional initiations take place in the street." Under these circumstances there is a danger of regarding street children as a natural part of the "landscape" with the public paying scant attention to their plight and therefore failing to appreciate their misery. Finally another African response to the street child problem is one of negativity. In this instance street children are referred to as "thieves", "mosquitoes" (Cameroon), "hopeless" and "ruffians", (Schurink et al.1993 : 15).

Fortunately, the picture is not as gloomy in Africa because there are a number of programmes designed for street children in many African countries, which seek to provide medical assistance, counselling, education and temporary shelter for destitute children. However, according to Drake in Schurink et al. (1993 : 15) these programmes have numerous shortcomings.

2.4 South Africa Over The Years

In South Africa the topic 'street children' is not well documented and as such there is very little information on the phenomenon during its infancy. It would therefore be appropriate to trace the history of the phenomenon since the 1920's and 1930's when black slums appeared in suburbs such as "Vrededorp", "Doornfontein" and "Jeppe" in Johannesburg (Van Zyl 1994 : 8).

Boys from the slum areas of the above suburbs formed gangs and roamed the streets. These street children engaged in activities such as begging, pickpocketing and caddying. These street children could at the least be regarded as "children on the street" (Van Zyl 1994 : 8).

In 1950 the Group Areas Act paved the way for displaced black communities to emerge. This created circumstances which aggravated the street child problem in Johannesburg (Swart 1988 b : 49). Associated with community displacement, factors such as poverty, neglect, illegitimacy and the children's unwillingness to leave their friends made the street child phenomenon in Johannesburg a discernible social problem. However, it is only from 1979 that the street children became regularly newsworthy in the press (Swart 1988 b : 49-50).

In this brief glimpse into the past it is obvious that "socio-economic considerations" were the prominent factors in precipitating the emergence of the street child problem. Furthermore, as economic hardship are endured by South Africans over the years the street child problem shows a tendency of growing alongside this negative socio-economic trend. Therefore, realistic approaches have to be adopted at addressing the street child problem. Approaches which would require insight, sincerity and a wide range of resources in order to achieve successful programmes.

2.5 South Africa at Present

The exact number of street children in South Africa is not known but it was estimated to be approximately 10 000 in 1993 (Unicef 1993 : 20) and therefore one expects the number to exceed 10 000 today in the post - apartheid , democratic South Africa of the present.

Most South Africans are faced with economic hardships which show no sign of abatement. This together with the rise of informal settlements called squatter camps around major centres such as Cape Town (Hout Bay), Durban (Cato Manor, Clare Estate) and Johannesburg has caused an exodus of children onto the streets in major centres. "The ages of these street children range between seven and eighteen years with approximately only 10 % being female"(Richter 1988 : 10-20).

Once on the streets, the children begin to establish a livelihood for themselves by engaging in informal activities such as ushering cars into parking places, providing car wash services, begging and sexual services. They are unable to attend schools because much of their time is spent on eking out a living or they are rejected by peers and teachers due to their poor performance and shabby appearance. In a study in Cape Town, Hansson (1991 : 1-5), found that "strollers" were physically abused and even embarrassed by teachers who told them that they "stank." Under these circumstances it is difficult to expect street children to be drawn into the formal education system. The status quo is reflected by the findings in Richter's report (1988 : 14), where it emerged that 66 % of her sample had received less than five years of schooling. This is a typical trend because as street children become accustomed to street life, they become alienated from school. " They don't fit into normal school because they have been used to earning and want money" (Williams 1993 : 837).

2.6 Attempts at Rehabilitation of Street Children in South Africa

2.6.1 An Overview of Some Approaches Towards Rehabilitation of Street Children in South Africa.

The street child problem in South Africa is multifactorial in origin and if any attempt is made to address it, such attempts need to be multifaceted and must extend into activities such as appropriate welfare programmes, suitable legislation and pertinent educational programmes. According to Ennew (1986 : 3-4), three possible strategies for working with street children are *containment* , *cure and prevention*. Containment usually takes place at institutional level and involves corrective measures. Cure is orientated towards weaning street children away from the streets while prevention involves halting the gravitation of children onto streets. The last approach is least exploited because of the difficulties associated with such programmes.

In South Africa the failure of many programmes for street children is due to the fact that an attempt is usually made to rescue children from street life without providing realistic alternatives for them (Swart 1990 a : 28 - 41). Therefore, when assistance programmes are being designed for street children, people need to be mindful of the fact that street children to a large extent have learnt to provide for themselves and survive in the hostile street environment. Many street children have attained *pseudo-adult* status at the expense of a lost childhood.

According to Giles (1988 : 142), "for such people it would be intolerable to be pushed back into an institution, where their life is wholly controlled by adults on whom they are totally dependent, and where their skills to survive on their own are totally lost." Within this framework one must be guarded against rushing into programmes that will merely satisfy the street child's immediate needs such as love, physical care, and security. Instead there must be a clear plan of action which is *a holistic, comprehensive and an inclusive strategy* and will offer a range of opportunities that are designed not only to meet the needs of individual street children, but also offer solutions to the street child problem by attempting to address the problem effectively."

In South Africa it is mostly non - governmental initiatives that are most effective at assisting street children (Swart 1990 a : 5 - 7). Furthermore, the majority of assistance programmes in this country are based on two approaches : *a) voluntary entry and participation and b) working towards prevention, reconciliation with the family and reintegration into society* (Schurink et al. 1993 : 240).

2.6.2 A look at some street child programmes in South Africa

* Preamble

Three non-governmental organisations are selected to illustrate the type of work that is being carried out in respect of street children. This information is derived from the HSRC report (Schurink et al. 1993 : 213-225). Emphasis is placed on the success rate of the programmes, their accessibility and relevance to the study.

2.6.2.1 Street - Wise

Street-Wise is an independent, non-profit, non-racial, apolitical and an a-religious inter-denominational, non-governmental organisation that has been established to assist street children.

Started in Johannesburg in 1986 as a *pavement school*, Street-Wise rapidly snowballed to become the largest organisation of its kind in South Africa. Initially the main focus at Street-Wise was education and job skills training because the greatest concern for street children was their lack of education.

There was no plan to accommodate street children, but it soon became clear that until the street child's dependency needs were satisfied, it would be difficult to assist them with their developmental and social needs. Accordingly, regular strategic services have evolved that enable Street-Wise to adapt to changes that influence its programmes. The most recent transformation was a shift in emphasis from providing shelter, to outreach programmes with the primary objective being the reconciliation of street children with their families.

* The Street-Wise programme

- (i) Street-Outreach : This entails the provision of primary health care, informal education, nutrition and advocacy on the streets.
- (ii) Drop-in Centres : Children are able to shower and wash their clothing at these centres which also offer meals and the range of services also on offer in the outreach programme.
- (iii) Shelters : Shelters allow for long-term assessment of children who are unable to return to their families. The shelter offers a stable environment that enables street children to obtain some form of education.

- (iv) Homes : These are for children who cannot return to their families and are therefore, condemned to a life on the streets.
- (v) Bridging Education : Children who have no schooling receive training in basic literacy and numeracy. Those who have missed a few years of schooling are given help to bridge this gap while children with learning problems are identified.
- (vi) Formal Education and Skills Training : Children who are academically able are enrolled at community schools or alternatively they are enrolled in a wide range of training programmes in keeping with their abilities and interests.
- (vii) Aftercare : According to Street-Wise it is important to realise that many of the problems which drive children away from their homes are not easily remedied. Therefore, children that have been reconciled with their families are made aware that they can turn to Street-Wise in time of need. Furthermore, in cases where families are poverty stricken they are assisted with food, clothing and cash.

2.6.2.2 The Homestead - Cape Town

The Homestead was opened in July 1982 in response to a need for the intake of street children. This organisation is a branch of the Child Welfare Society in the Western Cape and serves as a shelter for street children before they are transferred to the second phase of the programme at Patrick's House, foster care, places of safety or industrial schools. In 1993 it had the capacity to provide assistance to sixteen boys but was oversubscribed by eight.

At the Homestead there is a principal, a social worker, two house-mothers and an outreach worker.

The Homestead accepts children who are brought in by concerned people as well as children who present themselves and even children that are referred by the courts. In many instances children are even brought in by the police.

On 1 September 1991, the first street worker was appointed. His duties include the following :

- (i) The identification of network resources for street children.
- (ii) The monitoring of the health and nutritional status of street children.
- (iii) Make appropriate referrals of children to other assistance programmes.
- (iv) Liaising with the police and courts in matters pertinent to street children.

The children at the Homestead are encouraged to visit their parents. In some instances children alternate between living on the street and the centre while some return to the streets permanently.

No formal programme exists but an assessment of the children is made using the *Problem Profile Approach*. As soon as a child has settled, he is referred to other centres or homes for relevant assistance. Children at the centre are provided with meals, clothing, basic care and sleeping facilities.

The services provided at Homestead focus on the following :

- (i) Relationship building between child and care staff and street children.
- (ii) The assessment of the child's specific problems and needs.
- (iii) Stabilisation of the child using specific models, e.g.. behaviour modification.
- (iv) Processing of detention orders.
- (v) Attending to court enquiries.
- (vi) Tracing families of street children.
- (vii) Referring street children to appropriate agencies when necessary.

Homestead operates within a Christian framework and subscribes to the tenet that all children are entitled to shelter, food, clothes, care and love. The shelter admits only boys between the ages of six and sixteen years. Prospective residents are preferred to present themselves personally on their own volition.

A large number of street children who have been placed in the care of Homestead have been successfully reconciled with their families.

2.6.2.3 Lakehaven

Lakehaven is a registered children's home in Durban which was established in 1989 after the Khayaletu shelter was damaged by fire. The street child programme at Lakehaven has a threefold aim. These aims are :

- (i) To keep children off the street.
- (ii) To equip them with life-skills.
- (iii) To reunite them with their families.

Admission to the street child programme is voluntary and flexible because children are allowed ' to come and go as they please'. Lakehaven also has a children's home which is separate from the street child programme. In 1993 the street child programme was capable of accommodating thirty street children.

The street child programme at Lakehaven is run by a project manager (coordinator), a social worker, two child care workers and two educational officers. The following activities are incorporated in the assistance programme for street children.

- (i) Enrichment programmes for the development of life-skills.
- (ii) Formal school programmes using schools in the Kwa-Mashu and Umlazi suburbs of Durban.
- (iii) Counselling services.
- (iv) Drug awareness programmes with the assistance of social workers from SANCA.
- (v) Recreation programmes.
- (vi) Behaviour Modification Programmes with incentives for acceptable behaviour.

Lakehaven's initiative is an integrated approach where the services of the children's home has been extended to accommodate street children. In pursuit of their educational programme the staff was of the opinion that the street children would be uncomfortable at former House of Delegates schools because of their language and cultural differences, therefore, they chose schools in Kwa-Mashu and Umlazi. The street child programme has been considered as successful because the majority of street children that have been exposed to the assistance programme at Lakehaven regard it as a better option than life on the streets of Durban and many who abandon the programme eventually return on their own volition.

2.6.2.4 Informal programmes : The Ladies of Umhlanga Roundtable Outreach and Reception Programme for Street Children

This is an informal programme established by Mrs. G. Selley of Umhlanga. Mrs. Selley's programme originated in the form of an outreach programme where she used to 'pick up' children on the street and place them in shelters or foster care. Later her programme was extended to provide assistance and support to the foster mothers and a reception centre was established at the Umhlanga police station.

Currently the reception centre is perceived as a starting point for a structured solution to the "ever-growing problem of children living in the streets of Umhlanga" (Daily News 1997 : 12).

A social worker is employed by Mrs. Selley. The duties of the social worker is to identify and recruit street children so that they can be rehabilitated. The efforts of Mrs. Selley is supported by the "Ladies of Umhlanga Roundtable", who believe that if the street children are neglected then they will turn to crime in order to survive.

An evaluation indicates that this is a tertiary intervention programme aimed at early identification with the aid of outreach work, so that children can be reintegrated into their communities. The high success rate is attributed to the fact that it is an informal and flexible programme. However, if such a programme seeks extension then its objectives need to be revisited with the intention of revising them so that such a programme would eventually make a valuable contribution in respect of working towards solutions to the street child problem in South Africa. There must be a desire to address core problems such as family dysfunction, abuse, child labour and poverty if the destitute circumstances of street children is to be alleviated. This level of assistance lies with provincial and central government initiatives which are non existant. These areas of intervention cannot be addressed by an informal programme such as the one run by Mrs. Selley due to a lack of money and resources. The problem experienced by similar programmes is that they eventually develop into valuable projects with the need to extend their services but are constrained by a lack of support by local, provincial and central government. With the necessary support, initiatives such as Mrs. Selley's would lead to structured programmes and this would create opportunities for tangible efforts to evolve towards addressing the street child problem not only in Umhlanga but across South Africa.

The criticism levelled at the 'Selley programme' is also valid for the Street-Wise, Homestead and Lakehaven programmes. Against this background, every attempt should be made to allow creative development in addressing the street child problem. This would be possible by unlocking ideas and resources and by infusing a spirit of involvement, cooperation and support in the intervention programmes and the people who keep them functional.

2.6.3 Value and shortcomings of the selected South African programmes for street children.

Programmes offered by Street-Wise, Homestead, Lakehaven and even Mrs. Selley are all of value because of the following :

- (i) these programmes offer street children the experience of some form of childhood
- (ii) bonding experiences with adults are made possible during interaction between street children and care workers
- (iii) street children are given a chance to develop acceptable income generation skills
- (iv) the health and living conditions of street children are improved
- (v) parental contact is made possible
- (vi) the children are able to resocialise and experience a sense of acceptance and belonging
- (vii) in instances where runaways come directly to these programmes they can be referred to appropriate authorities for assistance and need not become street children

The inherent shortcomings of these programmes are as follows :

- (i) these programmes operate on voluntary submission and this has the potential to result in a high turnover of street children
- (ii) these programmes are sustained by donors, they lack state recognition and the support accompanied by such recognition
- (iii) children may continue with their street life and expect the programme to provide a place to sleep as well as a source of food and clothing

- (iv) these programmes will experience the need to expand or change orientation but will be restricted by a lack of money, manpower, inadequate facilities and even the presence of community resentment
- (v) street children are controversial, often unco-operative and may react quickly to pressure and stress, this could place severe strain on careworkers

The above advantages and shortcomings are not peculiar to South African programmes but have been characteristic of similar programmes in Brazil. This reason and other parallels between the street child problem in Brazil and South Africa prompted a discussion on Brazilian street child programmes.

2.6.4 Innovative Ideas and Programmes for Street Children in Brazil

2.6.4.1 Preamble

Educating children who work or live on streets is a challenge which is being met with innovative programmes in Brazil. Many of these programmes not only include the teaching of literacy and numeracy but also include education for work and life. Numerous Brazilian programmes use work as a medium for education. Research in Brazil has identified principles which are being utilized to contribute to the success of relevant education programmes. Institutionalisation of street children has been found to be ineffective while outreach and rehabilitative strategies have proved successful. Preventative projects form an essential part of the numerous street child intervention programmes (Levenstein 1996 : 45).

2.6.4.2 A comparative look at the street child problem in Brazil and South Africa

In comparison to South Africa, Brazil has considerably more experience in dealing with street children. This is not surprising for a country where the number of street children is estimated to stand at over ten million (Lusk 1989 : 56) in comparison to South Africa's ten thousand (Swart 1990 a : 28-40).

According to Levenstein (1996 : 45), the above fact alone makes research into Brazil's methods of tackling the street child problem particularly important for South African researchers.

There is also need to consider some of Brazil's innovative educational programmes for South African street children because Brazil is a leader in this field (Tacon 1991 : 91) and such an exercise could generate ideas and discussion about educating street children in South Africa (Levenstein 1996 : 41).

Educational programmes for street children in Brazil is taken to mean more than formal schooling. It means giving the children opportunities to become responsible citizens and self-actualising individuals. This is indeed an overwhelming task because similar to the case in South Africa, children living on the streets are usually deprived of the assistance of their primary educators - their parents. Consequently educational programmes are often part of a more comprehensive project in Brazil (Levenstein 1996 : 46). What is interesting is that in South Africa the usual approach to educational programmes for street children have been cure, containment or prevention. In Brazil there has been a similar approach with slight variation to the terminology where the terms used are correction, prevention and rehabilitation (Levenstein 1996 : 46).

It would be pertinent to explore some of the following approaches in Brazil eclectically :

*** Corrective Programmes**

According to Firme (in Levenstein 1996 : 46), the premise underlying this approach is that street children are delinquents in need of correction and institutionalisation. This approach was popular between 1965 and 1985 , but was found to be a failure and abandoned.

*** Rehabilitative Programmes**

In Brazil rehabilitative programmes are based on the assumption that there are 'personal skills deficiencies' on the part of street children. Accordingly these programmes are aimed to rehabilitate children into society by providing services such as residential therapy, drug detoxification programmes, literacy courses and skills for the world at work. According to Lusk (in Levenstein 1996 : 46), such programmes are only partially successful because they are costly and have limited reach in respect of children on the streets.

* **Outreach Programmes**

In Brazil like in South Africa, outreach work involves street workers who go out into the streets to either encourage children to join shelters and assistance programmes or to help them while they are on the street.

According to Lusk (in Levenstein 1996 : 46), outreach programmes in Brazil are based on the theory that there are major deficiencies in society, therefore the empowerment of the individual is the best way to solve this social problem.

In Sao Paulo where approximately sixty thousand street children exist (Lusk 1989 : 71), the Archbishop of Sao Paulo runs an outreach programme which offers educational and counselling services to children in the street setting. The *educadores de rua* (street workers) teach basic hygiene, business skills and literacy to street children. It is a belief of the educadores de rua that street children should not conform to an unjust society but should be encouraged to resist injustice and degradation (Levenstein 1996 : 46).

* **Prevention Programmes**

The preventative approach according to Gorde (in Levenstein 1996 : 46), involves working with families in communities with the intention of preventing the separation of a child from his family. The main premise of this approach is that, it is not the children themselves but also the social structure that is the problem. Therefore, children are forced onto the streets due to inadequate social services, abject poverty and family breakdown (Levenstein 1996 : 46).

Preventative programmes in Brazil offer schooling, daytime activities and employment for high-risk children. These programmes are also designed to offer the high-risk family support in order to prevent their disintegration. The support on offer are community shelters, day-care centres, artisan cooperatives, family planning services and small business services. Although many of these activities are not directly related to the education of children, they contribute towards the development of stable communities in which children are less likely to abandon their homes for a life on the streets (Levenstein 1996 : 46). This type of programme has proved to be successful. In the state of Ceara the number of day care centres between 1987 and 1990 rose from eight to one hundred and seventy five and were attended by over sixteen thousand high-risk children (Levenstein 1996 : 46-47).

2.6.4.3 An evaluation of the Brazilian scenario

In both Brazil and South Africa most of the children seen on the streets are workers who have family ties and homes, who work on the street to supplement their family income, and even attend school in some instances. Many of these children sell sweets or newspapers, shine shoes, wash or even watch cars. The income derived is generally handed over to their families. A minority of these children have no family links and are exposed to hunger, violence and exploitation. They are sometimes raped and forced into survival sex, according to Richter and Lusk (in Levenstein 1996 : 46). In Brazil, street children are used by adults as thieves, purse-snatchers or drug couriers. This trend has taken root in South Africa (Daily News 1998 : 1).

Unlike South Africa, Brazil has been able to experiment with intervention programmes. *Escola Tia Ciata* which opened in 1985 and closed in 1989 due to financial and political problems, was oriented towards accepting children and preventing them from becoming outcasts in society. Another programme was a government initiative which utilized correctional procedures and institutionalisation in an attempt to rehabilitate street children. This programme originated in Ceara in 1965 and was abandoned in 1985. According to Firme (in Levenstein 1996 : 46), none of the successful programmes in contemporary Brazil adopt such an approach.

The Brazilian government is playing a significant role in making an attempt to address the street child problem because there is a realisation that preventative strategies are vital and it is unrealistic to expect the community to be able to address a major problem such as street children.

Although the Brazilian and South African scenarios are similar in many instances, the attitudes of Brazilian street child workers are more direct. As pointed out previously in this study the street child problem has a multifactorial etiology and originates in the child, the community, the family and even the educational system. While in Brazil there is recognition of this fact and efforts are made to address the problem at these levels, in South Africa the assistance programmes are 'fundamental' and restricted to the micro-level (child) only. In South Africa there is an absence of meso-level (family programmes which are supposed to identify and assist high-risk families. The availability of such programmes are essential because they would help preserve the family structure so that children would be less likely to gravitate towards the street.

2.6.4.4 A Critical Overview of the Street Child Problem In South Africa

In South Africa it is apparent that the approach towards the street child phenomenon is problematic. In this respect one will agree with Hansson (1991: 10) when she states that the currently accepted conception of “street children” in South Africa is “*phallogentric*” because it is dominated by the male experience of street life and excludes all female experience.” This is the case in India as well where there is no special provision for 45 % of the “street girls” who have attained puberty (Pandey 1991 : 299). Most probably the phallogentric attitude arises because of social values and its conflict with the fact that a majority of the street girls would generate their income from prostitution. Accordingly, these street girls would be evasive for obvious reasons and researchers would find it difficult or even embarrassing in some instances to access this category of street children.

Data supports the fact that South Africa’s street children are predominantly black male in the following ratios :

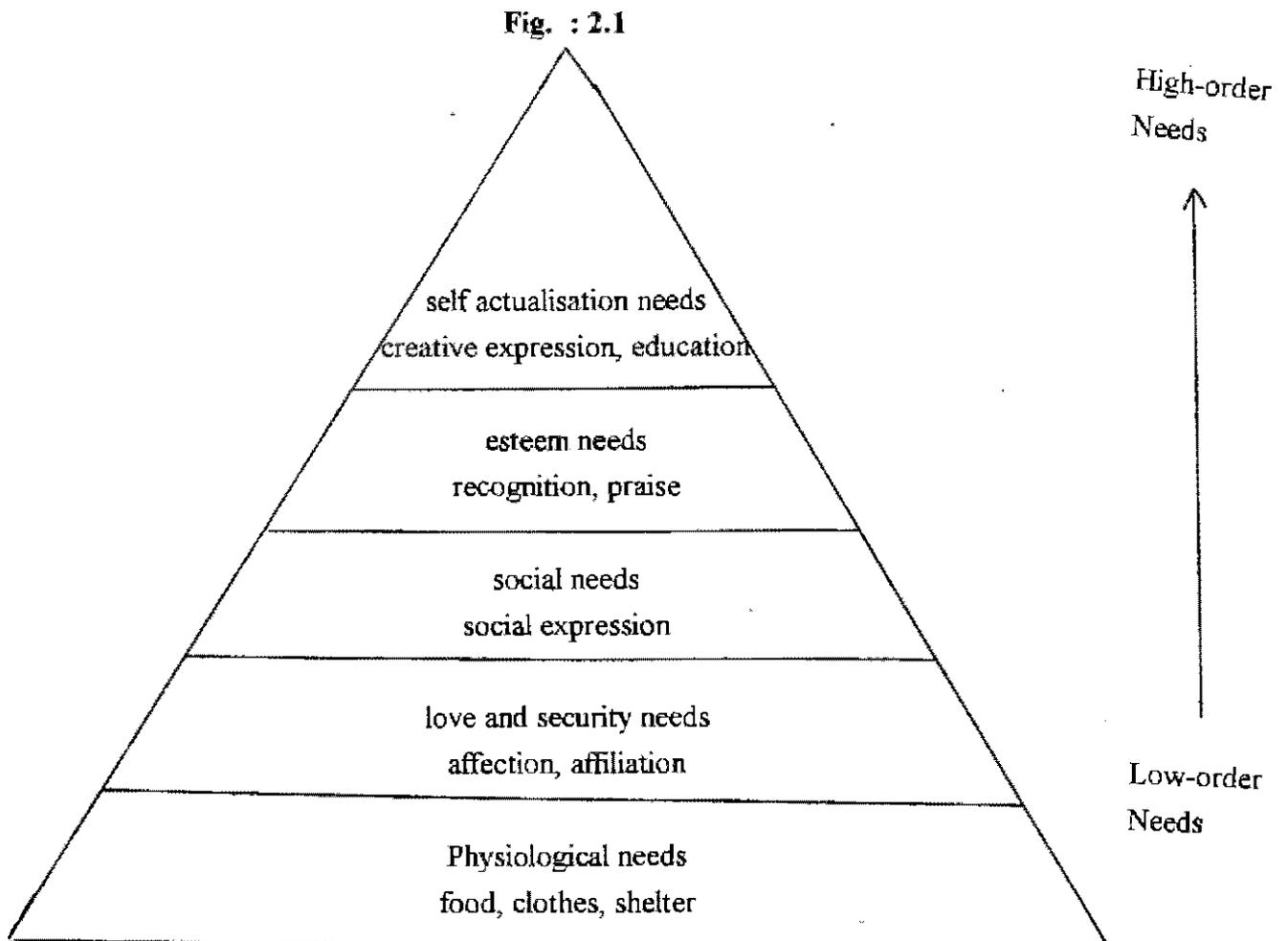
	Male	Females
Gerbers (1990)	81,1 %	18,9 %
Schärf (1988)	90 %	10 %

The fact that female street children do exist justifies the need for specific programmes tailored to assist them because adopting a simplistic attitude towards any issue inevitably leads to unrealistic conceptualisation which will give rise to ineffective programmes aimed at curbing the problem. This leads to further problems, in this instance the street girl population could increase with a consequent increase in prostitution resulting in an increase in the incidence of HIV infection.

The response to the street child problem in this country was initially in the form of the Child Care Acts of 1960 and 1983 where South Africans demanded that the South African Police (SAP), remove little pickpockets and beggars from the street and deal with them accordingly. Simultaneously, concern for the welfare of street children led to the establishment of soup kitchens, shelters and other projects such as ‘Streetwise’, ‘Twilight Children and ‘Khayaletu’ (Schurink et al 1993 : 20).

2.7 The Needs of Children

In the context of this study the term *need* is perceived as *something necessary or requirement*. Any human being has different types of needs. Maslow posits five levels of needs arranged in a hierarchy as follows :



(Maslow 1970 : 1-58)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Need Satisfaction

According to Maslow need satisfaction progresses from bottom to top. Only after primary needs are satisfied the ability of satisfying secondary needs can be entertained. However, today need satisfaction is considered to be interactive.

2.7.1 Physiological Needs

This refers to human physiology which is responsible for subsistence. These needs come first because they are directly linked to survival. Physiological needs comprise of food, health care, clothing and shelter.

Street children face a danger of need deprivation. In Baltimore a study carried out by Taylor and Koblinsky (1994 : 20-25) revealed that approximately one third of all homeless mothers indicated that their children did not have enough food to eat several times each month. In India, Pandey (1991 : 289) reports that 48,4 % of street children get only breakfast while a substantial chunk, slightly over one third get neither breakfast nor tiffin. South African street children face the same dismal nutritional deprivation. According to Richter (1988 : 27), 20 % of the street children in the sample she studied showed stunting which she ascribed to "chronic undernutrition," presumably during early childhood.

The above facts are indicative that street children work on empty stomachs for long periods thereby endangering their survival and development.

A large proportion of street children have no protection from inclement weather and environmental pollution due to insufficient shelter.

Bathing and toilet facilities are but rare luxuries for street children while health care is unsatisfactory. This implies that street children are a vulnerable group and highly susceptible to communicable diseases.

2.7.2 Need for Love and Affection

Usually parents are inclined to provide a stable, continuous, dependable and loving environment for their child from birth. Furthermore, where the parents of a child enjoy a rewarding relationship with each other this enhances the 'loving environment' which the developing child needs. Through this relationship with its parents and later, an ever-widening circle of other people, the child develops his/her personal identity and attains a concept of worthiness. These initial relationships with the family, friends and peers will eventually pave the way towards a healthy development of the personality, ability to respond to affection and eventually the possibility of becoming a loving and caring parent.

An important feature of parental love is that the child is valued unconditionally, that is irrespective of sex, appearance, abilities or personality. This love is given without expectation of gratitude in return. Parents communicate this unconditional affection through their interaction with the child, which includes activities from changing baby's nappies and responding to it's gurgles of delight and then gradually initiating him into the social world to even punishing him for unacceptable behaviour.

Love and affection has a profound influence on the development of 'self-approval' and 'self-acceptance' in the child. In 'normal' children the stable home environment and resultant family dynamics create a climate where the child is exposed to acts and conditions propagating love and affection. For example, during the early months of infancy the mother is both 'insulator' and 'filter' to the child (Pringle 1974 : 35) because she acclimatises her child to his new environment by acts such as reminding others to talk softly so as to avoid disturbing the sleeping baby, and rubbing his back after feeds in order to prevent regurgitation. Throughout the early years, close physical contact is provided, projecting feelings of protection and affection thereby creating reassurance in the developing child.

As the child progresses from infancy, into early childhood his milestones will transform him from an egocentric being to one who is a socially well adjusted child. However, this is an ideal because there is no guarantee that every child will develop a constructive attitude despite being offered the opportunity to experience adequate love and affection.

Street children often originate from home conditions that reflect abuse and neglect instead of love and affection. According to Richter (1988 : 21), " Some children gave accounts of horrifying and macabre events. One boy displayed his torso which was covered with small cuts which he said had been caused by his step-father who had chopped at him with an axe after killing his mother. One boy had been made to sit on a hot stove for hitting his sister. One boy reported that his mother had broken his hand when he was a small child because he had played with her 'accessories'." These circumstances often cause psychological and emotional maladjustment in street children (Richter 1988 : 54).

2.7.3 Self Esteem Needs

The above refers to a need for prestige, success and self-respect. In an environment where these children are usually harassed and rejected the development of a positive sense of social identity and self-worth is placed at great risk. Consequently it is not surprising that self-esteem among street children is low (Pandey 1991, Richter 1991, Donald and Swart - Kruger 1994).

The above circumstances is no surprise considering the fact that the transition from a helpless infant to a self-reliant and self-accepting adult involves an immense magnitude of emotional, social and intellectual influences which should continuously be sustained and supported by incentives such as *praise and recognition*. Growing up is never easy because it is a process beset by difficulties, conflicts and setbacks. To overcome these hurdles incentives provided in the form of praise in recognition of achievements reinforce success and instil feelings of pleasure. For street children, however, there are little -if any- opportunities to be recognised and praised. The experience of success, pleasure and worthiness of the self does not form part of their frame of reference.

The deprived circumstances of the street child present added difficulties that prevent adequate realisation of self-esteem needs. These added difficulties are :

- (i) the existence of a fluid, unpredictable and evasive life-style.
- (ii) the lack of an adequate relationship with an adult caregiver.
- (iii) the loss of emotional support from adult caregivers.
- (iv) the prevalence of undersocialised conduct disorder among street children which causes anxiety, depression, timidity and worry.
- (v) being socially rejected and marginalised.
- (vi) being physically and /or verbally abused.
- (vii) physical survival takes precedence over other needs and relationships.
- (ix) street children are commonly characterised and stereotyped as both criminal and morally depraved.

(Donald and Swart-Kruger 1994 : 169-173).

The above circumstances are certain to place severe constraints on the street child's self-esteem needs.

2.7.4 Self-actualisation Needs

The need for self-actualisation is also referred to as the need for self-fulfilment. This need revolves around the realisation and development of one's potential. When a person is unable to fulfil this need, frustration is the natural outcome (Pandey 1991 : 296).

Those factors which contribute to adequate self-actualisation will comprise aspects such as creative expression, recreation and educational needs. These aspects will be examined in the life world of the street child.

In the case of creative expression, it is usually an inherent urge which is reflected in creative activities across numerous domains such as artistic creations, musical excellence and literary creations. Creativity can only be expressed if proper guidance and opportunity for its expression is provided. Street children, most certainly lack opportunities and guidance towards realisation of their creative aptitude.

Recreation and leisure time activities are necessary in order to rejuvenate mind and body. The fulfilment of this need may involve a wide range of activities such as reading for pleasure, stamp-collection, listening to music, attending theatre performances or the cinema and participation in sports. The breakaway from routine enables one to relax and even channel one's energy into creative ventures. The street child is unlikely to experience any level of " recreational satisfaction " because of his deprived existence. In Kanpur, India it was found that " A vast majority of the street children have markedly (45,3 per cent), very unsatisfactory (30,4 per cent) or just satisfactory (23,8 per cent) level of recognition and praise in society. Obviously, the majority of street children feel deprived of recognition and praise of their performances," (Pandey 1991 : 295). These circumstances are no different among street children in South Africa.

Education develops the intellectual faculties of a person and acquaints him with his world. It is through education that a child will be able to appreciate and interact in his social and physical milieu. Educational deprivation of the street child turns him into an outcast of society where he is marginalised by virtue of his deprivation. These miserable circumstances are compounded by the failure of the education system to reach out to such children. In South Africa, education is modelled on western systems. Children in this country are expected to perform in accordance with ideologies foreign to them. Consequently, their cultural orientation places them at a disadvantage because they are out of touch within a westernised character of mainstream education. This contributes to high failure and drop-out rates as well as a 'culture of non-learning'. There is no easy solution to this problem because the street child has to be reintegrated into a westernised capitalistic society. Therefore, if they are educated within any other ideology they will eventually 'drop out' in any case. It is for this reason that the education system and its mode of delivery has to be revised as a matter of urgency rather than education itself. This is necessary because a large number of street children do not have more than a grade four education, in a society which places high value on meritocracy. The educational deprivation of the street child effectively excludes him from social integration while educational empowerment can serve as the passport to his reintegration. In theory this appears simple but the reality is a rather complex set of dynamics.

2.7.5 Failure To Meet Children's Needs

Where one of the basic needs is not satisfied or is inadequately satisfied then development faces the danger of becoming distorted (Pringle 1974 : 152). Symptoms of maladjustment could be present as aggression and/or withdrawal. In the case of aggression people react easily but the timid and shy are easily overlooked yet both are equally significant calls for help, in response to emotional, social or intellectual need deprivation.

The high cost of maladjustment can be counted in the prisons, mental hospitals and special schools which contain a high proportion of individuals who were rejected during their childhood. However, the greatest evil of the South African scenario is that no attention is given to the "border-line" cases which constitute individuals who are maladjusted (have poor mental health) but appear 'normal'.

This peripheral group will display disruptive behaviour such as hatred, lack of concern for others, an inability to form satisfactory relationships and irrational anger due to their maladjustment, but will continue in society as *able misfits* who are undiagnosed and unassisted.

In the case of street children, where parents are poverty stricken and tempers flare up easily, an environment of hostility confronts them. This can be harmful in a child's development especially in his ability to deliver unselfish and loving care as an adult. A child growing up in a discordant home is likely to become emotionally disturbed or anti-social (Pringle1974 : 152).

Where the need for new experiences is not adequately met during childhood through to adolescence, the intellectual ability of the child will become 'stunted' (Pringle 1974 : 152). Furthermore, the more unstimulating , uneventful and dull life is the greater the opportunity for frustration, apathy and restlessness. With there being nothing eventful and rewarding in their miserable circumstances, it is easy to understand why street children resort to crime and drug abuse easily.

In the school situation the potential exists for the need satisfaction of children to be confused, where praise and recognition are invariably given for 'achievement' instead of effort. Consequently this need is easily satisfied where children are intelligent, healthy and well adjusted. In sharp contrast, the 'intellectually slow', culturally disadvantaged, emotionally neglected and maladjusted receive less praise and recognition although their need is far greater. This is an untenable situation because whatever small successes the latter group achieves, usually involves greater effort and perseverance, yet they receive less reward due to their lower achievement level. It is this latter group which forms the source of future street children because, their family circumstances failed them in the first instance and the education system serves to aggravate their difficulties.

A reasonable educational approach for street children should ensure that their self-esteem and self-actualisation needs are met in addition to the provision of readjustment programmes. In South Africa this would entail designing an educational programme which is supportive and developmental in nature such as that propagated by Street-Wise.

This implies that educators should be involved in practical educational endeavours which are intended to relieve the educational hardships experienced by South African street children and to eradicate the inherent deficiencies which acted as precursors to their predicament in the first place.

Furthermore, the belief that “teachers must teach so that learners can learn” must be challenged by replacing the present education system with one of relevance where the net will include even street children. In South Africa, politicians make promises concerning the provision of relevant education for the entire spectrum of the nation. This is easier said than done because such promises are unrealistic and at times tend to be irresponsible because they translate into a burden for educators and academics because of the following reasons :

- (i) No thought is given to limited financial resources.
- (ii) Corruption is rife in government departments causing misappropriation of much needed funds.
- (iii) Human resources (educators) are inadequate and inequitably distributed in the various regions and provinces.
- (iv) Proposed educational reforms are usually borrowed from other countries and not modified prior to implementation. In many instances such programmes may be unsuitable to South African needs.
- (v) The existence of nine provincial educational departments with each possessing unreliable data in respect of educators and learners is placing the education system under severe strain.
- (vi) The South African Schools Act 84 of 1986 has transferred effective control of schools into the hands of parents, who in most cases are unable to cope with this responsibility. This is indicative of governmental irresponsibility.

Under the above circumstances reform in the education system is merely a veiled attempt at transferring the responsibility and financial burden of school education to the community, which is characteristic of developed nations such as America, Canada and England. Contemporary educational policies in South Africa lack 'real' reform such as the :

- (i) The incorporation of outreach education for marginalised children.
- (ii) The provision of vocational education.
- (iii) The provision of support services in education such as pedotherapists and psychologists (The latter have been removed from schools).
- (iv) Catering for aptitudes in classrooms. This is necessary in the South African classroom which is not only multi-cultural in nature but also overcrowded due to the scramble for education in post-apartheid South Africa.

The education system in South Africa is out of tune with the divergent needs of its learners, communities and citizens, and is certainly one of the causes of the street child problem. The addressing of these needs go beyond the promises of politicians if there is a sincere desire to provide education of relevance to all South Africans. That there are serious problems in education , there can be little doubt if one considers the uprisings of unions and parents against the relevant government department. Furthermore, academics have also voiced their concerns regarding the deficiencies in South African education as seen in this declaration by Cerrans (1991 : 12), "The causes are also scholastic : The failure of education systems, the fact that they no longer fulfil their role and are inaccessible to vast numbers of children. Inequality of opportunity, high rate of failure, marginalisation and the inadequacy of schools to meet the needs of the population are seen as major factors in sending adolescents into the streets ."

When educators are unable to satisfy the child's need to optimally fulfil his / her potential it usually leads to frustration. It is important to realise that education develops a person's intellect which in turn facilitates socialisation and acceptance into society. Pandey (1991 : 295) illustrates this point well in the following statement. "The non-fulfilment of the self-actualisation needs in absence of opportunities for creative expression, adequate recreation and educational facilities mars the proper growth of the personality of the street children, compels them to lead a monotonous life, and fills them with misinformation."

In retrospect, literature consulted, reveals that the safety, security, esteem and self-actualisation needs of street children are not adequately satisfied. These socio-psychological deprivation contribute to emotional misery in the lives of street children. In an attempt to overcome their depressing circumstances many land themselves in activities such as crime, drug addiction, prostitution and deviant behaviour.

2.8 The Rights of Children

According to Schurink et al. (1993 : 26) the rights of children found their earliest expression in the " Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1959." This declaration was orientated towards the basic needs of children in terms of moral entitlements without affecting the *enabling rights* of children. "As such the Declaration therefore did not have the power to alter the social or legal position of children in relation to adults" (Schurink et al 1993 : 26).

In comparison to the Declaration of 1959 the World Summit for Children held in New York in 1990 culminated in a more appropriate Convention which recognised the *child's personhood* by placing emphasis on the significance of 'liberty', 'privacy', 'equality', 'nurturance', 'integrity', the right to participate in decisions affecting them' and 'freedom of expression' (Schurink et al 1993 : 27).

Within the comprehensive framework promulgated by the Convention specific goals were set for rights of the child covering areas such as 'child survival', 'development and protection' of the child. This seemed to be a welcome development because alongside the emergence of a fully-fledged children's rights movement increasing efforts were made to communicate a global awareness of the plight of street children and other children in difficult situations (Schurink et al 1993 : 26-27).

Admittedly, organising summits, formulating Conventions and promulgating Bills of Rights to protect children are usually propagated by noble ideals but in reality these attempts may be in vain. For example in South Africa Act 108 of 1996 states that every child has the right to :

- (i) Basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services.
- (ii) To be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, or degradation.

- (iii) To be protected from exploitative labour practices.
- (iv) Not to be required or permitted to perform work or services that are :
 - (a) Inappropriate for a person of that child's age or
 - (b) Place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual or social development.

The legislation incorporates a spirit of good intention but in reality it may remain just words describing good intentions because resources are scarce and the conditions facing street children so destitute in many centres that it is impossible to give effect to the legislation. Furthermore, legislators seem to remain silent on the issue as to whom final responsibility devolves, in ensuring that the needs of the child is met in terms of the legislation when they are leading a pathetic existence on the streets.

2.9 Resumé

This chapter traces the street child phenomenon since the year 800 BC thereby illustrating it as an old problem which has its origins in a number of complex etiological factors that show only subtle variance in different regions across the globe. General causes of the phenomenon are poverty, high unemployment rates, family disintegration, maladjustment to school structures and systems and rapid urbanisation alongside limited resources. People around the world are responding to the street child phenomenon out of concern for children who are suffering due to a lack of shelter, food and care. The response towards the street child problem has taken many forms ranging from brutality, international conventions to specific national legislation. This highlights the magnitude and severity of the street child phenomenon as a global problem and serves to reinforce the need for continuous investigation of the phenomenon with the intention of keeping pace with its dynamics in the hope that some day the problem may be eradicated.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE STREET CHILD

3.1 Introduction

The home is the only institution which has an overall influence on a child's development. It is important for the home to offer the child a supportive environment so that he may learn moral values, develop a balanced personality and realise his goals. Where parents create an environment which exudes warmth, co-operation, acceptance, involvement, interest and loyalty the child inevitably experiences security which offers him an opportunity of *un-impaired socialisation*. In contrast, pathological home factors in the form of parental neglect, abuse, lack of involvement and inadequate care leads to impaired socialisation.

The parents' relationship with each other as well as the parent child relationship is a dynamic interaction which allows the child to be informally educated. Through such education within the family, children become conversant with their environment and discover what is acceptable and not acceptable in terms of behaviour, values and attitudes.

The family is a dynamic social institution taking various formats such as nuclear and extended versions but the common thread is that it is "*a small relation-structured group with a key function of nurturing and socialisation*" (Reiss 1965 : 449).

It is desirable that a family will offer the child a safe haven thereby enabling him to journey into adulthood with a minimum of pathological influences and a maximum of supportive influences. Unfortunately, certain family types such as the nuclear family, the sham family, the hostel type family, the neglected family and single-parent family are high risk families which do not comply with the needs of children and according to Schurink et al. (1993 : 80-82), children in such families usually present some form of misbehaviour. Furthermore, a high number of street children tend to originate from these types of family structures (Schurink et al. 1993 : 85).

3.2 Aim and Outline of Chapter

There is no doubt that changes and demands of our times has reshaped education provided in homes and schools in the recent past. The mass media and technological advancement has contributed to a generation of better informed and more independent children. This in no way diminishes the significance of educators and families. On the contrary children still remain dependent on their families and teachers in order to understand their changing environment so that they can adapt to these changes. In some instances children may respond positively to these demands but in other instances it could lead to deprivation, disillusionment and cause maladjustment which contribute to dropouts and street children.

Against the above background an exploration will be made of the family dynamics and the consequences of pathological factors which arise in the family structure with reference to street children.

3.3 Familial Patterns in South Africa

The concept *family* has been defined by numerous people. In this study the definition offered by Reiss (1965 : 449) will be used because it can be applied to all possible family structures. Reiss (1965 : 449) perceives a family as "*a small relation-structured group with the key function of nurturing and socialisation*" (Du Plessis 1994 : 84).

In South Africa numerous family patterns such as "Nuclear", "Extended", "Polygamous", "Single-Parent" and " Reconstituted " may be identified. Against this background and with due consideration to the fact that most street children are black, it would be pertinent to study the African family in South Africa.

3.3.1 Characteristics of Contemporary South African Families

In South Africa there is a significant number of families that have become westernised and function in an ethos of western values while the majority of families are still struggling in third world conditions (Houghton 1973 : 18). In some societies the family is defined as having less role differentiation while in other societies the family accommodates a more varied role differentiation.

In keeping with the above, a family may be perceived as a special group with concomitant characteristics. It is necessary to be aware of these characteristics in order to understand the influence the family exercises over its members as well as the community (Schurink et al. 1993 : 63).Some specific characteristics of the family are as follows :

- (i) Two adult persons of opposite sex who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship with each other.
- (ii) A single household living together under the same roof.
- (iii) Involves the establishment and maintenance of a common subculture.
- (iv) Participation of family activities is spontaneous.
- (v) Functions such as socialisation and control are integrated and unique within each family.
- (vi) There is loyalty among members.
- (vii) Reproduction occurs and associated responsibilities towards the children are assumed spontaneously.
- (viii) The family as a social institution is a product as well as a component of the community (Schurink et al 1993 : 63; Du Plessis 1994 : 13).

Western society experienced an extensive process of structural change accompanied by development due to the intellectual currents prevailing during the Renaissance, late Medieval Period and Industrial Revolution. The ensuing changes snowballed into major changes in what had been the established family structure. The nuclear family which had been part of the extended family, experienced isolation and began to exist and function as an independent and separate unit. Economic activities were separated from the family context and transferred to structures outside the family. The individual person became the basic labour unit and moved to the industrial metropolis together with his nuclear family in order to take advantage of the employment opportunities offered there.

These circumstances transformed the nuclear family into a conspicuous unit because it was "*cut adrift*" and consequently became extremely vulnerable, these circumstances created operating dynamics which degenerated the family causing negative influences such as misguided discipline, impeded socialisation and paved the way for eventual disintegration of family life (Hoffman 1978 : 177-196).

It seems that the family structure has not been static over the ages. However, the precursors to change have gained magnitude and the family structure has become more volatile in recent times. This sentiment is also shared by the following article. "*The family obviously cannot remain static in a rapidly changing world. Traditional family structures are changing and family bonds are weakening. Factors that contribute to this change are disharmonious marital relationships, an increase in extra-marital relationships, the constraints imposed on women's occupational roles and married life and inadequate education of the child. In a situation where antipathy against children prevails the child has no experience of the I-YOU relationships and intimate personal communication required for education, socialisation and the fulfilment of needs*" (Du Plessis 1994 : 57-81).

Evidence suggests that there are numerous debilitating circumstances which confront the child in society. The safe haven of the family has been transformed into a hostile environment where the child struggles for attention, love and the fulfilment of needs. In many instances the family is unable to satisfy the needs of the developing child and he then rejects the family and chooses the street as his *home*. According to Venkateswaran (1994 : 47-57) "Associated with growing urbanisation it is not only migration but also a *breakdown* of traditional family and community structures which have all combined to create a vulnerable group of urban children called *street children*."

Le Roux (1994 : 65-71) endorses Venkateswaran's sentiments when he indicates that "Traditional, rural community lifestyle has become an urbanised, impersonal and formal businesslike way of life. *Family-life has consequently deteriorated and is increasingly characterised by a loss of function. Harmful and inhibiting social, economic and political influences inundate and overpower the family situation.*"

There is no doubt that a child needs a stable family which would enable him to enter into relationships and experience a sense of belonging. Such circumstances provide the opportunity for children to assimilate values, and also generate a personalised environment which would epitomise success, nurturance, security, and healthy relationships. In contrast, unstable family set-ups hamper the healthy development of children because they are traumatised due to severance of relational ties, insufficient care and interruptions in schooling and residential amenities. This causes *stress* and makes the child susceptible to abandoning his home for a dismal life on the street.

3.4 An Examination of the African Family

In South Africa, the African population is dominant in number. Schurink et al. (1993 : 65) distinguishes the following groups. The Nguni which includes Zulus, Swazi, Ndebele and Xhosa . The Sotho : North Sotho, South Sotho and Tswana, the Tsonga-Shangaan and Venda. These groups are dispersed over the entire country where each has its own culture and language. These people are inclined to incorporate Western values and standards in their lives but a large number still maintain their original traditions.

The African family differs from the White family in a large measure. In African families strong ties are maintained with the extended family. Order was preserved in the African family by strict adherence to a hierarchical structure in which status was determined by seniority. This structure was designed to uphold morals, social control and discipline (Levitas 1983 : 38).

The extended family comprises two or more nuclear families which have coupled together by the extension of the parent-child relationship. The extended family also occurs in other societies. The extended family reflects the following advantages for its members :

- (i) Its members are economically interdependent.
- (ii) It develops systematically in that relatives from a particular family lineage bond together in a culturally-prescribed manner.
- (iii) Relations between the members of the nuclear family and the members of the extended family are usually prescriptive and mutual assistance and support are considered to be culturally obligatory.
- (iv) It offers psychological and material support to members.
- (v) It makes leadership possible and promotes the welfare of dependent family members.
- (vi) Economic security is maintained because in times of financial hardship members support each other.
- (vii) Emotional security is promoted because emotional ties are extensive instead of intensive and this helps prevent loneliness (Schurink et al 1993 : 65 ; Du Plessis 1994 : 16-17).

3.4.1 Traditional Family Life versus Contemporary Family Life in KwaZulu.

In some respects the dynamics of traditional African life in this part of South Africa could be considered as ideal for child rearing because : the child was highly valued and received strong support on its way towards assimilation into society and secondly the duties of the female was restricted to being a housewife while also including the tending of crops. This gave mothers ample opportunity to fulfil their obligations as parents. Finally, there was always an attitude of benevolence towards the child. All this seemed to work towards helping the child to blend into the existing social order. Under these circumstances there was little or no reason for children to run away from home and they never did.

However, when traditional life in South Africa began its transformation and economic factors made their impact, the emergence of the emancipated working mother, absent father and cohabitation marked the death knell of the traditional African family. In traditional families children were exposed to an environment that exuded warmth and protection that supported and enhanced their development, while modern life ushered in a new set of dynamics, which resulted in a category of marginalised children referred to as street children.

Economic development in South Africa had a significant influence on the social structure of its African people. In response to industrialisation and mining operations Africans moved from rural areas to find employment in urban areas.

Initially African men moved to urban areas and lived in hostels or other accommodation due to the government policy on urbanisation. Later on they were joined by their families. A new family pattern emerged, where the head of the family and his wife worked in the city as migratory workers who were separated from their family. In this case the children would be left behind with the extended family. In some instances the nuclear family separated from the extended family and established itself in the urban area (Schurink et al. 1993 : 66).

In many instances this resulted in the start of an *illegitimate relationship tradition* where the working father 'shacked up' with a woman while away from home causing his common law wife to function as the head of a 'single mother' family at home.

The existence of extramarital relationships caused estrangement and a decline of the 'father figure'. Where the father is concerned, his role definition includes "fair mindedness", "the bearer of authority and discipline", "the person who inculcates skills and competencies", "the person who is responsible for developing expressive behaviour in his daughters and instrumental behaviour in his sons" (Du Plessis 1994 : 72).

Where the father is absent from his family and also involved in an extramarital relationship this exerts a negative influence on the child's development. Some problems associated with the absent father are :

Negative impact on the child's development such as :

- (i) poor development of sex-role identity.
- (ii) impaired socialising and cognitive functioning.
- (iii) inadequate personality development.

These developmental problems are usually present as follows in affected children :-

- (i) **Anxiety and Worry**
Children realise their vulnerability and helplessness. They fear that their needs will not be provided for. Their trust in the absent father is broken because they fear that he will forget them and their mother will abandon them.
- (ii) **Rejection**
Children will perceive their father's *shacking up* with another woman as rejection of themselves and they begin to doubt whether they are worthy of love.
- (iii) **Feelings of Yearning**
Longing for the absent father is usually accompanied by intense wishful thinking and fantasising about reconciliation between their parents.

- (iv) Anger
In some instances children may display increased aggression due to their sense of injustice.

- (v) Divided Loyalty
The mother may due to anger and frustration caused by her husband's infidelity project feelings of anger and negative criticism towards the errant father. Children may end up by having to choose sides.

- (vi) Inferiority Complex
Children may become ashamed of their untenable circumstances and attempt to conceal their unhappiness by withdrawal.

- (vii) Deprivation
Owing to economic restraints placed on the mother by having to provide for her children in the absence of sufficient support from the errant husband, may experience frustration and anger. This could result in poor parenting and even an extramarital relationship on her part.

According to Levitas (1983) and Nzimande (1987) in (Schurink et al. 1993 : 65-68), the changes in the African family system resulted in prolonged absence of fathers, older brothers and even chiefs. This contributed to the weakening of discipline, social control, the disappearance of protection, care and support which the nuclear family enjoyed within the extended family.

In African societies the status of women is traditionally low. Black women are only considered to be *real-women* if they give birth to children. This implies that their status is directly linked to the number of children they bear. Their status increases with the corresponding increase in children that they bring into the world. Alongside these circumstances the transformation of social structures together with new economic demands in recent times have forced black women to relinquish their traditional role and enter the labour market. The status and circumstances of the black woman in post-apartheid society has changed dramatically under the impetus of legal reforms. The pursuit of issues such as gender equality, employment equity, affirmative action and black empowerment have all contributed towards the emancipation of the black woman in contemporary society. Many black women now occupy positions which were once the preserve of males in South African society. In the last United Nations world ratings for gender empowerment covering one hundred and seventy four countries, South Africa was placed twentieth (Business Report 1998 : 6). These circumstances imply that the stereotype of the traditional black woman is disintegrating in post-apartheid society. Testimony to this is the reality that black women now occupy numerous prestigious and influential positions across the whole spectrum of South African society. Although the emancipation of the black woman is necessary these circumstances also produce an increasing number of black children who grow up in a fatherless and motherless environment because the majority of black females are still either lowly paid domestic workers or unskilled labourers. Such an environment denies children love, safety and security. In most cases these children are further disadvantaged because they are unable to access day care centres or creches due to unavailability and lack of funds. According to Le Roux (1993 : 41) only 2,5 % of South African pre-schoolers were receiving educare in 1993.

Where few black children receive preschool education the implication is that many black preschoolers have to forego a secure home as well as the nurturance offered by appropriate day care facilities. "Le Roux (1993 : 42) maintains that this lack of care is one of the causes of the disturbingly high crime rate, the alarmingly high figure of premature school dropouts, the shortage of trained workers and the high unemployment rate" (Du Plessis 1994 : 41-42). Furthermore it would not be surprising to discover that many street children originate due to these circumstances.

3.5 The Family Circumstances as a Cause of the Street Child Problem

Unstable home life can have prolonged harmful effects on children's scholastic progress. According to Cox and Jones (1983) as cited by Du Plessis (1994 : 31), the child's home circumstances during the primary school period has a far greater impact on scholastic progress than any other factor at school. According to these authors parental neglect, uninvolved, lack of parental love and inadequate care lead to social disadvantage. These circumstances may not necessarily be unique to the lower socio-economic strata and as such also bedevil the affluent (Du Plessis 1994 : 31).

Le Roux (1993 : 42) considers numerous undesirable home factors which according to him are contributory factors to the street child phenomenon. These are : broken homes, inadequate family relationships, illiteracy, absence of parents, breakdown of traditional family structures and family violence.

Research seems to indicate that street children in Johannesburg ascribed their living on the streets to parental behaviour which they perceive as different from the kind of behaviour parents are expected to display. In this respect family disintegration and corporal punishment administered unfairly by fathers under the influence of alcohol are provided to substantiate their perceptions (Richter 1989 : 192-197).

The family circumstances as a cause of the street child phenomenon must be examined in the contexts of what the researcher would like to refer to as *Intra Familial Level* and *Extra Familial Level Dynamics*.

Intra Familial Dynamics are factors which operate within the family and include misconduct in the family, family violence on members, abuse of substances by parents and parental abuse of children.

Extra Familial Dynamics have their origin outside the family and include factors such as single parenthood, economic difficulties, high density housing and social isolation.

3.5.1 Characteristic Problems on the Extra - Familial Level

* **Single Parenthood**

“Characteristic of the family circumstances of street children is the fact that they mainly come from broken and single parent homes ”(Schurink et al 1993 : 67). This quotation reinforces the fact that a dual parent family unit is more stable than a single parent unit. Single parenthood may arise due to the mother being unmarried, estrangement between parents, divorce, temporary absence of a parent, absence of a parent due to death and desertion by parents.

* **The absent father**

The father functions as a link between the family and society. His role definitions include good and balanced judgement, maintenance of discipline, inculcation of skills and competencies and the pursuit of ideals. The father also evokes role definition by virtue of the fact that he will play rough games with his sons and instil assertive behaviour while displaying delicacy towards his daughters and encourage tenderness in them (Pruett 1993 : 10).

The career demands and hurried life of the modern father has resulted in the waning of the traditional father figure. The father now usually spends long hours away from home due to his employment. Consequently he is physically and psychologically estranged from his family members. This has a negative impact on the child's development. Furthermore, this situation is becoming increasingly prevalent by the day due to the increasing number of single parent families (Du Plessis 1994 : 72). According to Le Roux (1993 : 40), this is a “*typical pathological factor which gives rise to the street child phenomenon.*”

* **Divorce**

Family disintegration and divorce are reaching alarming proportions in our society. This is undesirable because it causes a general deterioration of family life in society.

Although divorce may seem as a remedy in marriages where tension, conflict, antagonism and untenable situations exist, however, in most instances children perceive divorce as a loss. These circumstances may cause the children, that are involved, to experience feelings of anxiety, heartache, rejection, longing, loneliness, anger, divided loyalty and guilt-feelings. Such circumstances usually act as *push factors* to the street child phenomenon.

In contemporary society, divorce is an accepted remedy in instances where marriage has failed. Divorce is one of the 'recognised' etiological factors in respect of the street child problem in South Africa. Against this background, the 'institution' of marriage has to be revisited because of the following :

- i) Marriage is usually associated with a secure and supportive environment while divorce is usually associated with alienation and deprivation.
- ii) Divorce is a remedy for adults who consider their marriage a failure.
- iii) The child's 'interest' in divorce settlements are restricted to visitation rights, inheritance and custody, based on outdated criteria.

It is imperative that divorce should not be an abrupt termination of marriage. Where there is reason to believe that children may be unreasonably prejudiced by impending divorce, then the law should make provision for an *interim divorce*. The interim divorce would then become final upon satisfactory evidence being submitted by educators, social workers and psychologists.

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3. *Push factors : These are etiological factors of the street child problem and include natural population increase, increased cost of living, search for additional income and disintegration of the traditional family.*

* **The Emancipated Working Mother**

The emancipation of women as a result of democratised human rights and pressures imposed by economic hardship has led to mothers having to fulfil multiple and frequently conflicting roles in society. In addition to being a marriage partner she has to compete in the workplace, satisfy social commitments and still be a housewife and mother to her family. "This diversity of role obligations often lead to tension, conflict and frustration" (Du Plessis 1994 : 70).

Women in traditional and pre-industrial society had a clearly defined position in society. In some communities it entailed the role of housewife and mother while in others it included that of tiller of the soil and tending of crops. The life of contemporary women has changed dramatically from that of traditional women. In modern society women are better educated and accorded numerous rights and privileges which cause her to shuttle between numerous roles, often with contradictory expectations during the course of a day. Perhaps the most remarkable transformation accompanied by the emancipated woman, is the entry of the modern woman into the labour market. This is a reality which has evolved out of necessity because :

- (i) Economic circumstances oblige her to work in order to assist towards the support of her family.
- (ii) An employed mother enhances the financial circumstances of the family thereby contributing to its progress.
- (iii) Working mothers become an integral part of the workforce where they contribute to the insatiable demand for talent and expertise.

All the above have contributed towards making working mothers career orientated leading to self - development and self - fulfilment, thereby paving the way towards their personal satisfaction.

Although the working mother may bring material benefits to her family there is also a compromise in diminished maternal contact in the family. The mother's first responsibility is the care and education of her children. In the case of the working mother it is not going to always be possible for her to give her children the necessary care and attention that they require because she will be exhausted at the end of her working day.

For example, a child who wants to share his achievements or disappointments with his mother while she is caught up with work commitments elsewhere, will cause the child to feel neglected. Such a child may develop feelings of insecurity, loneliness and even resentment. In many cases, the mother is forced to compensate for the lack of real educational care by spoiling the children, being exceptionally lenient towards them and by indulging them excessively with material gifts (Du Plessis 1994 : 71).

The question which begs an answer is whether a successful career women can also be a successful mother? In present circumstances it is difficult to balance the demands of the family against the demands posed in the workplace, because employers do not accord working mothers special privileges to enable them to fulfil their familial commitments.

Women have become an integral component of the workplace and therefore the economy. "In America it is estimated that forty one million women of childbearing age work outside their homes. Furthermore, sixty percent of mothers with children under the age of six are in the workforce due to forced circumstances" (Daily News 1997 : 22). These circumstances are no different in South Africa where women make up a large proportion of the workforce. When Brenda Evans, Chief Executive Officer of "Pepsi Cola" indicated that she was giving up her two million dollar a year job to be at home with her children, her action caused mixed reaction. However, the critics missed the real issue. The challenge for women is not to conform to the workplace but rather to transform it to integrate with their needs, inclusive of their biological clock and family time. This should entail options such as flexible schedules, job sharing, working from home, shorter work weeks and childcare facilities at the workplace for mothers. These transformations are necessary because the importance of women in the workplace cannot be ignored and at the same time their dualistic roles as mother and executive should be enhanced instead of eroded.

In South Africa the emancipation of the working mother takes on an additional dimension. This relates to instances where mothers enter the workplace and pursue rewarding careers, their childcare responsibilities are relegated to creches and pre-primary schools. Working mothers with little or no education will be confined to jobs with meagre remuneration. The children in these instances are usually placed in the care of elder children, relatives or worse still left to their own devices. Children in the latter circumstances are prone towards gravitating into street life.

It is multi-factorial factors such as these which emanate from society and the home that create an interactive precursor to the street child problem.

* **Cohabitation (Shacking Up)**

During the last decade or two a new phenomenon associated with the courtship procedure called the premarital cohabitation (shacking up) has emerged. Although this tendency faces disapproval by parents it is still on the increase among all strata in the metropolitan societies of South Africa (Du Plessis 1994 : 75).

Cohabitation usually takes place among young people who live together in sexual monogamy and maintain a joint household. There is a strong affective bond between the parties in this arrangement and their intention is to eventually marry.

Shacking Up or cohabitation involves a lower level of commitment in comparison to legal marriage. It amounts to *acclimatizing* to the marriage situation and may be beneficial to the couple concerned because :

- (i) It affords the opportunity to enter into a flexible yet stable relationship when compared to a normal dating arrangement.
- (ii) It provides a more intimate, unlimited sexual relationship and exempts the couple from the implications of harsh divorce legislation upon termination of the relationship.
- (iii) It has financial advantages .
- (iv) It provides greater security to two prospective marriage partners (Du Plessis 1994 : 76).

Cohabitation also has numerous disadvantages, some of which are as follows :

- (i) Living together exposes parties to possible exploitation and abuse.
- (ii) A high level of preparedness and maturity is essential for successful cohabitation.
- (iii) Events such as unwanted pregnancies and rejection are high risk factors.
- (iv) Parental disapproval and rejection could result, especially where females are concerned.

- (v) Cohabitation is not considered as a valid preparation for marriage and many South Africans would consider such arrangements as amoral and the parties as being promiscuous.
- (vi) In the event of a failed relationship future relationships could be jeopardized.

In South Africa, cohabitation is not as popular as in many western nations. A form of cohabitation was popular among the migrant black worker whilst away from home. In this relationship children were reared but they were illegitimate. Such children faced a bleak future because they suffered forms of discrimination such as the inability to inherit from the biological father in the event of his death.

The misery of these children was compounded by the unstable family dynamics within which they were conceived. Such children were prone to family disintegration, poverty and even rejection by the father. Children in these circumstances usually faced a life of condemnation where the streets were often their only escape. It is a fact that many children in South Africa started a life in the streets as a direct result of the breakdown in the cohabitation relationship.

*** Socio-Economic Factors : Poverty**

According to Richter (1989 : 192-197), it appears that poor material conditions play a significant role in causing children to gravitate onto streets. The view that financial hardship is one of the primary causes of the street child phenomenon can perhaps be supported by the fact that street children in this country are generally black and it was the black population that was previously economically disadvantaged.

Furthermore, the street child phenomenon is prominent in underdeveloped economies. For example Honduras a small impoverished nation has a high number of street children (Duggan 1990 : 104-113). India, well known for its poverty has millions of children whose basic needs are poorly met or not met at all by the parents. In such a situation, children who are exploited, abused and neglected flee from their homes in disgust (Pandey 1991: 281-288). Some of the negative effects of economic problems according to Nye and Bernado (1973) as well as Bush (1988) as cited by Schurink et al (1993 : 82) are :

- (i) Inconsistent and excessive discipline, lack of parental care which leads to early independence of children.
- (ii) A low self-esteem.
- (iii) Individual needs of children are not recognised.
- (iv) Little interest shown in children.
- (v) The children wish to escape from their oppressive environment with the desire to live on their own.

* **Some Negative Effects of Poverty**

There is little doubt that poverty contributes significantly to social disadvantage in children especially with regard to education and this impacts negatively throughout the child's life.

Poverty means that the child's basic physical and psychological needs cannot be satisfied. Thousands of black children in South Africa are confronted every day with violence, poverty, hunger and deprivation. The economic recession in the country has seen a rise in retrenchments and unemployment causing impoverishment among all South Africans. Poverty and the shortage of money cause experiential deficits and restricted opportunities leading to premature school leaving.

Furthermore, the economic recession in South Africa is placing educational services under severe strain. This results in a shortage of qualified teachers and equipment, insufficient textbooks and crowded classrooms. These circumstances are prevalent in most of the public schools in South Africa, and is the major cause for frustration among teachers and pupils. These dynamics have a direct bearing on the quality of education and may have contributed to the high failure rates causing pupils to become disillusioned with education. The gloomy 1997 matric pass rate of 63 percent in the Northern Cape, 54 percent in Kwazulu Natal, 42 percent in the Free State, 31 percent in the Northern Province, 51 percent in Gauteng, 45 percent in Mpumalanga, 76 percent in Western Cape, 50 percent in the North West and 46 percent in the Eastern Cape which translates to a national pass rate of approximately 47 percent is indicative of the severe economic and socio-political problems in the educational structures of the country. Therefore, it is not surprising that pupils "discard education for other alternatives including a life on the streets" (Sunday Times 1998 : 4-6).

* High Density Housing

High density housing in the context of this study implies living in crowded circumstances. The presence of a large number of people competing for limited resources gives rise to negative affective and behavioural responses which could range from aggression to withdrawal.

A large number of street children originate from the above familial circumstances and cite their high density living experience as miserable and one of the reasons that caused them to leave home. In Kanpur, India the majority of the families of the street children have between seven to nine members (Pandey 1991 : 280). In Tegucigalpa the average number of other persons living in the child's nuclear household is 5,3 (Wright, Wittig, and Kaminsky 1993 : 85).

In South Africa, the black population has grown three times as fast as the white population. This has not only led to large family units of approximately five per household but has led to associate problems such as crowded living spaces and high demand for services provided by municipalities against limited resources. According to Jordaan et al. (1991 : 11), when a population reaches a point where its growth exceeds growth in means of subsistence, it gets caught in a circle of chronic poverty. This means that essential commodities such as housing and food is beyond the reach of large numbers. High density living in South Africa is characterised by some of the following :

- (i) Flat dwelling has become a popular option. Unfortunately the confined living space can be detrimental to a child's social orientation.
- (ii) Stress and aggression are more common when parents and children live in crowded conditions. Black children who were traditionally accustomed to open spaces in the countryside where they could play and explore in relative freedom often find it difficult to adapt to the crowded living conditions. Often these children are forced to go on the streets. Such forced roaming leads to gangsterism and other behavioural problems.
- (iii) In an attempt to relieve frustration, people tend to change their abode frequently in cities. In Johannesburg twenty one percent of whites change their abode once a year. Percentages for other population groups are higher (Le Roux 1992 : 87).

Some consequences of high density living are as follows :

- (i) Where families always change their abode, children are consistently faced with disrupted schooling and are presented with new surroundings and friends all the time. They experience difficulty with forging relationships with friends.
- (ii) Children are usually subjected to a rushed and impersonal lifestyle.
- (iii) Space and privacy are usually non-existent in informal settlements and this is detrimental to mental health.
- (iv) In the midst of congestion, children become isolated because of a lack of close social contact. (One will often hear people indicating that they have no time to visit relatives)
- (v) The urban lifestyle causes people to become neurotic due to factors such as a lack of privacy as well as a lack of intimacy, diverse cultural influence and hectic daily routine.

In modern society the often negative influences of high density living impact on children at a tender age and result in what Le Roux (1992 : 35) refers to as the anti-child culture. Furthermore, in South Africa more job-seekers from rural areas are still pouring into cities in large numbers. Squatter camps have become a reality around many large cities. These informal settlements are the worst kind of high density living because they are precursors for crime, poverty, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, poor parental relationships and violence. It is pathological factors such as these in the home and community that give rise to the street child problem in this country.

According to Richter (1989 : 192-197) as well as Geldenhuys (1990 : 92-109), some specific problems of high density housing are :

- (i) The children lack privacy.
- (ii) The child does not have the chance to develop a good self image.
- (iii) Opportunities to respect others are diminished.
- (iv) High density housing has a harmful effect on study habits, attitudes towards sex and intensifies fatigue and irritability leading to erratic discipline (Reed and Baali 1972 : 101).
- (v) Frustration and friction are prevalent and can lead to various behavioural problems.

The above could act as etiological factors in the preliminary phase of the street child phenomenon.

* **Social Isolation**

In modern society the smaller, isolated family has evolved. This type of family lacks the close family ties of the extended family where relatives depend on each other for support.

Families of street children are not only isolated but in many cases exist in slum areas where there is overcrowding, lack of sanitation and other health hazards prevail. Furthermore, isolated families experience specific problems such as being far away from child care facilities, medical facilities and recreational facilities, as well as parents' loss of adult friendships which usually deprive the child of contact with adults with whom the child can identify. Finally emotional and intellectual needs are not met due to insufficient contact and stimulation (Schurink et al. 1993 : 82).

* **The Anti-Child Climate in Contemporary Society**

According to Frost (1986 : 242), " these are troubled times in the care and education of children." This sentiment is endorsed by Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibiya (1996 : 316) who state that the task of educators in south Africa are compounded by a complex social, economic and cultural environment which presents changed and changing norms and values. It is a fact that the harmful and unfavourable social influences such as family disintegration, overcrowding, undernourishment, inadequate educational facilities, political violence and a loss of vision of the future tend to complicate the role of educators to such an extent that children experience their families and society as situations in which they have no place (Smith and Le Roux in Prinsloo et al. 1996 : 316).

There is an increasing awareness that 'being a child' in contemporary society is becoming a traumatic experience. Le Roux (1992 : 84-88) states that factors such as overpopulation, modern society, pressurised material circumstances, choice of a profession, emancipation of women and their striving for self-fulfilment have created an environment that is 'hostile to children'.

In South Africa, there is an abnormal increase in population (Jordaan et al. 1991 : 2-6). The danger of a rapid increase in population is that it is accompanied by increased urbanisation which in turn creates numerous social and education problems. It becomes increasingly difficult to provide essential amenities such as housing, recreation facilities and education. In the case of education, the number of schools become inadequate causing classrooms to swell. This situation makes impossible demands on the educator in guiding children towards self-fulfilment. In constrained socio-educational circumstances such as these the child's development and maturation is jeopardised and may lead to severe need deficiencies (when needs are not satisfied) that may cause mental problems (Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibaya 1996 : 316).

Furthermore, when children are deprived of safety, environmental security, peace of mind and protection from parents and the community this is usually epitomised by a lack of care, love, acceptance, interpersonal communication and belonging. Under such circumstances there is little hope for the fulfilment of esteem needs such as respect and self-esteem. In South Africa, these dynamics are perpetuated by ongoing political violence (Prinsloo et al. 1996 : 316).

The degree to which a child is deprived of his/her basic needs serves to create a diminished level of positive experience and positive attribution of meaning to the child's life-world. There is adequate reason to believe that the structure and dynamics of society in contemporary South Africa have indeed created an anti-child climate (Prinsloo et al. 1996 : 316-317).

The anti-child climate in contemporary society according to Packard (1983 : 3-9), has effectively made the defenceless child a 'threatened species'. Therefore, in the context of the street child's life world the anti-child climate is an added difficulty that may impede his/her reintegration or even act as an etiological factor and cause the child to abandon his/her home in order to escape the negative living conditions that prevail.

* **Career Demands**

In South Africa where there is a growing tendency for both parents to work, family values are being increasingly replaced by career values. This is exemplified by children of working mothers often being placed in inadequate substitute care because the career oriented mother is unable to discharge the dual responsibilities of 'mother and career woman'.

The career demands of the parents, decrease opportunities for family members to be involved in collective activities and tends to destabilize the family. This causes confusion and unhappiness in children. Children in these circumstances find it easy to reject the safety of the home for the streets.

* **Demands of a Materialistic Society**

South Africa comprises a society which is status conscious. The enhancement of status is accompanied by a feverish pursuit of material wealth and status symbols. This is evident in the turn towards designer and brand names such as *Versace, Nike, Christian Dior, Caterpillar* and driving high tech *BMW's*. This indicates that money and material possessions have become a priority against a decline in the traditional familial values. In these circumstances married couples display a tendency towards being *childless by choice* because children are perceived as an economic burden as well as a threat to their careers and recreation. Where materialistic people do have children, these children are often left to their own devices with too much money and too little parental involvement in their lives.

* **The Emancipation of Women and Maternal Care**

The successful pursuit of occupations which were once an all-male preserve may cause a woman to forfeit her refinement and femininity. Consequently she ceases to be a woman, mother, educator, character builder, nurturer and inspiration to her children. This implies that emancipation has impacted negatively on the institution of marriage leaving children devoid of security, safety and acceptance that a mother's love has to offer. "Research has confirmed that poor maternal care or complete absence thereof was the primary cause of youth derailment" (Du Plessis 1994 : 52).

In South Africa, forced emancipation of many black mothers is evident. Usually these mothers are employed as domestics. Their meagre incomes barely reaching subsistence levels do little to improve the material deprivation and parental neglect that their children experience. Children in these circumstances form a significant number of the street child population.

* **Consequences of the Anti-Child Climate**

The 'anti-child climate' is seen as hostile towards child bearing and child rearing. In the anti-child climate prevalent on a micro-level (in the home) parental love and care is eroded. Parental care geared towards ensuring that children observe healthy eating habits and healthy sleeping habits are absent. Children are increasingly left to their own devices. They resort to fast foods, pop music and addiction to videos all of which tend to impact negatively on their education towards normative maturity (Du Plessis 1994 : 66).

On a macro-level (in society) the anti-child climate has seen children being placed in substitute care outside the home, where attitudes towards the child may be cold and distant. In some instances the child begins to feel unsafe and anxious.

The anti-child climate may, in numerous instances, result in material, emotional and social neglect of children. The suffering is imprinted on pathetic faces of destitute children such as those in squatter camps. Furthermore these children could develop deviant behaviour. To add insult to injury, the anti-child climate is given impetus by finding public sentiment against children when aspects such as contraception, abortions and sterilization are bandied about or forced upon people. This creates antipathy against children, leaving parents confused about their roles and attitudes towards children.

Such circumstances only serve to derail the child's socialisation and development thereby creating an environment where children tend to seek happiness and satisfaction in alternate institutions such as 'teen-cults', 'gangs' and even life on the streets (Du Plessis 1994 : 66).

3.5.2 Characteristic Problems on the Intra-Familial level

* **Misconduct in the family**

The misconduct which street children usually cite are alcohol abuse and excessive discipline. Where both or even one parent abuses alcohol it is usually accompanied by detrimental consequences. There can be an increased level of intra-familial quarrels, the standard of living decreases, relationships deteriorate and respect for the offending parent diminishes (Schurink et al 1993 : 82).

Like alcohol abuse numerous street children also cite excessive discipline as reason for their plight. This is not surprising because excessive discipline can evoke the following reactions in children :

- (i) It could inhibit the child's personality.
 - (ii) It could have a degrading effect on the child.
 - (iii) The child may develop animosity towards the parent.
 - (iv) The child could run away from home to avoid this type of discipline.
- (Schurink et al 1993 : 82).

* **Educational Level of Parent**

Street children usually originate from homes where their parents are illiterate or have minimal education. Therefore they are trapped in poverty. According to Pandey (1991 : 306), the large majority of street children in India who live in their homes and eke out a living in the streets are entrapped in poverty. The income of the parents is abysmally low. They lack education and training to be absorbed into lucrative jobs. These circumstances are also prevalent in South Africa.

* **Educational Style of Parents**

South Africa is experiencing tremendous transformation on social and political frontiers. In many instances individuals and institutions are overwhelmed by sudden change. The attitudes of parents as educators are also affected by these circumstances. Presently some educationists, psychologists and politicians hold liberal notions which amount to the "exhortation that parents and other educators should do nothing to prejudice the uninhibited development of the youth's personality and behaviour" (Du Plessis 1994 : 51). Liberal attitudes in parents may render them ineffective educators where they will be unable to take corrective action in order to achieve the realisation of social virtues such as *trust, self-discipline, fidelity, goodwill, sound judgement and sensitivity*. Consequently effective education may be impeded and the youth may suffer disorientation where a healthy relationship with authority is absent.

It is the task of parents to provide the children with direction in life and where necessary to enforce authority. This necessitates the application of discipline in a fair and consistent manner. Discipline can be applied in various ways.

Botha (1977 : 47-53),distinguishes between the authoritarian, permissive and democratic approaches to discipline in the family. In the case of authoritarian families an overprotective and strongly achievement oriented attitude prevails, while unbridled freedom prevails in the permissive family. In democratic families, an educationally balanced attitude prevails.

Usually excessive or permissive discipline is applied in the homes of street children. In instances of excessive discipline there is strict control accompanied by physical and verbal abuse. Such discipline not only exceeds the bounds of law but also impacts negatively on the child because it engenders negative feelings and emotions such as degradation, poor personality development, animosity towards parents and lowered self confidence. In the case of permissive discipline unbridled freedom prevails and children are not subjected to the authority of the educator. A laissez-faire attitude prevails and any guidance which is applied becomes ineffectual (Du Plessis 1994 : 51).

In both the above cases the educational style is inappropriate and the child is unable to relate effectively with his parents in order to receive the support towards his development. Therefore, it is no surprise that many street children originate from these circumstances.

3.5.3 Psychological Problems and Stress Centred in Parents

*** Psychological Problems**

In many cases the homes of street children epitomise disharmony and aggression between marital partners as well as between parent and child. These circumstances originate due to marital discord, insufficient income, infidelity, poverty, the demands of the workplace, alcohol and drug abuse.

These miserable circumstances leave parents frustrated, unhappy and incapable of performing their educative role. Instead, pedagogic neglect, indulgence and spoiling, strict discipline and over-protection may prevail.

In the case of pedagogic neglect, educative trust and empathic authority are non-existent. Children in this situation experience difficulty in conforming to pre-determined norms of conduct. Many children in informal settlements scattered around South Africa find themselves in these conditions because both parents usually spend the entire day either in search of jobs or working for a meagre income.

Where parents realise that they fall short of being good parents and tend to deprive their children of quality time, they are predisposed towards indulging and spoiling their children in order to ease their conscience. Indulgence and spoiling leads to pleasure gratification and irresponsible behaviour.

Some parents may be disposed towards strict discipline. This creates fear and anxiety in children due to the high expectations of such parents.

In many instances, parents may become over-protective of their children. In South Africa, the high crime rate is having serious social and economic repercussions. Many parents may become obsessed with the protection of their children. This is indeed necessary in present day South Africa where the authorities are unable to curb the runaway crime, but in certain instances over-protection is known to cause infantile behaviour which in turn restricts a child's social emancipation.

Psychological problems in parents may cause symptoms such as depression, anxiety, emotional outbursts and temper tantrums. Such parents are in need of assistance themselves and when they are given the responsibility of caring for children, then circumstances are created which confuse children and leave them insecure. What is even more alarming is that children may also emulate incorrect behaviour. This may bring them into conflict with peers and teachers thereby causing their estrangement. Such children sometimes consider themselves as misfits and prefer to lead a life of freedom on the streets instead of experiencing a *hostile home and school atmosphere*.

* **Stress**

In the rushed lifestyle of modern society, parents in South Africa have not escaped unscathed because many suffer from the *disease of the twentieth century called stress*. Stress afflicts all irrespective of age, gender, race or social status.

Generally stress refers to an individual's emotional and other reaction to psychological and physiological demands made on him/her.

According to Dr. Hans Selye as quoted by Buwalda (1990 : 19),

“Everybody has it, everybody talks about it, yet few have taken the trouble to find out what stress really is. Nowadays we hear a great deal at social gatherings about stress of executive life, retirement, exercise, family problems or the death of a relative.”

It is important not to perceive stress as a villain. It is an integral part of our modern day life. Instead, people need to learn how to control or manage it. Stress should be considered as a negative emotional experience arising from the interpretation of certain events such as a threat, a challenge or even death to which a person is forced to respond. People have to learn to handle challenges and negative experiences so that they will be in a position to regulate stress levels because according to Roode (1970 : 122), despite the widespread occurrence of stress it is still one of the greatest destroyers of modern life.

In informal settlements the misery created by poverty which is regarded as a bioecological factor (environmental factor) is known to cause high stress levels.

In the case of psychosocial causes, where people ascribe stress to social events, South Africans are a prime target because of the dramatic political, economic and social transformations taking place alongside the pressure to achieve in an uncertain society. This form of stress causes physiological, social and psychological disorders. Some pathological symptoms of stress are :

- (i) Anger
- (ii) Anxiety
- (iii) Impotence
- (iv) Helplessness
- (v) Shame
- (vii) Moodiness
- (viii) Depression
- (ix) Suicidal tendencies
- (x) Guilt feelings
- (xi) Fear

Some specific etiological factors of stress are :

- (i) Poor self-concept
- (ii) High drive to achieve
- (iii) Unsatisfied needs
- (iv) Lack of skills
- (v) Low level of exposure
- (vi) Lack of social support and participation
- (vii) Seclusion and isolation
- (viii) Conflict

Studies reveal that the parents of many street children have low educational achievements, lack skills, experience little or no social contact, have a poor self concept and their many needs remain unsatisfied due to abject poverty. These conditions precipitate psychological problems in the parents and the question which begs an answer in this situation is whether the solution would be to remove the pathological circumstances or assist the parents in overcoming their psychological problems, that is by giving them therapy. In reality both approaches would be ideal but the availability of resources is the limiting factor. In this instance factors in the parents and society interact towards aggravation of the street child problem.

3.5.4 Problems Centred in Children

A street child, in many instances, is similar to other children in the context that he or she has considerable potential and abilities which can be used either for self-actualisation or self-destruction. Children need to feel that they are somebody in order to develop an adequate sense of identity. Unfortunately, a balanced identity is difficult to achieve especially during the turbulent phase of adolescence. During adolescence children experience a heightened degree of self-consciousness in the sense that they are becoming aware of changes in their bodies and feelings. In fact, the teenager is overwhelmed by "everything that he can refer to as his own that will shape his self-perception and eventually his identity" (Engelbrecht 1994 : 34).

Erikson (1963 : 28) refers to the period of youth as the period of identity crisis. It is during this period that young people establish their individual identities in order to avoid role confusion. Establishing an identity is a personal matter and is a prerequisite for every child's healthy development. In this regard there has to be an inner forum where decisions pertinent to the self are made by the self. This means that a child must be able to say, "This is what I am and not something else, these are my values and this is how I should act" (Langeveld 1965 : 85).

In the case of street children the very fabric of their existence is threatened because of radical changes in the home, family, school and society accompanied by inadequate educative guidance during early identity acquisition. This situation is aggravated by contact inflation, marginalisation and deficient formal education. This means that the psychological development of the street child is impeded and he is prone to maladjustment which may be present among others in the following symptoms :

- inquisitiveness and experimentation
- evasion of responsibility
- rebellion against authority and social values

The above circumstances may cause an unresolved identity crisis which means that such children drift without any identity making it difficult for them to communicate adequately with the world and their fellow beings. Children in these circumstances are easily isolated and begin to experience their life as devoid of meaning and as being 'dead end'. Their daily interaction may be fraught with confrontation, conflict and rebellion. Consequently, they would be unable to experience human intimacy and trust.

In the absence of intimacy, love, trust, contact, affection and love a deep sense of deprivation evolves which translates into psycho-social problems in the child. In cases where parents are absent or present but incapable of assisting the child there have been cases where the needs of such, unfortunate children have culminated in "alternate solutions such as smoking, drug abuse, exhibitionist nudism and the desire to leave home". On reaching the streets, these children soon realise that their 'alternate solutions' are not *solutions at all* because life on the streets eventually leads to disillusionment , feelings of frustration and emptiness. This is one reason why street children tend to grasp spontaneously at assistance programmes but eventually gravitate toward street life again but will not usually recommend street life to other children.

3.5.5 Family Dynamics

Le Roux (1992 : 83) presents the following viewpoints in respect of the contemporary family circumstances in a socio-educational context :

- (i) A socio-educational environment that leaves little room for the child.
- (ii) A situation in which the child's education is seriously prejudiced.
- (iii) A society that constricts the child's living space.

Packard (1983 : 3-9) presents eight familial influences which according to him are hostile to children. These are :

- (i) The care of preschoolers is increasingly transferred to inadequate substitute care facilities.
- (ii) Children are frequently regarded as restrictions imposed on parents freedom.
- (iii) Many parents are not child - oriented and are uncertain about their educational role.
- (iv) Children become isolated as a result of poor familial communication.
- (v) Intimate contact and educational activities are diminishing in the family setup.
- (vi) Child abuse and neglect are becoming increasingly prominent features of modern society.
- (vii) An increasing number of children are being caught up in divorce situations.
- (viii) Single-parent families are becoming a widespread problem.

These circumstances impact negatively on the family in modern times and leave the child prone to undesirable influences and options such as running away from home or dabbling in drugs.

3.6 Chronological Ages at which the Child leaves the Parental Home for a Life on the Streets

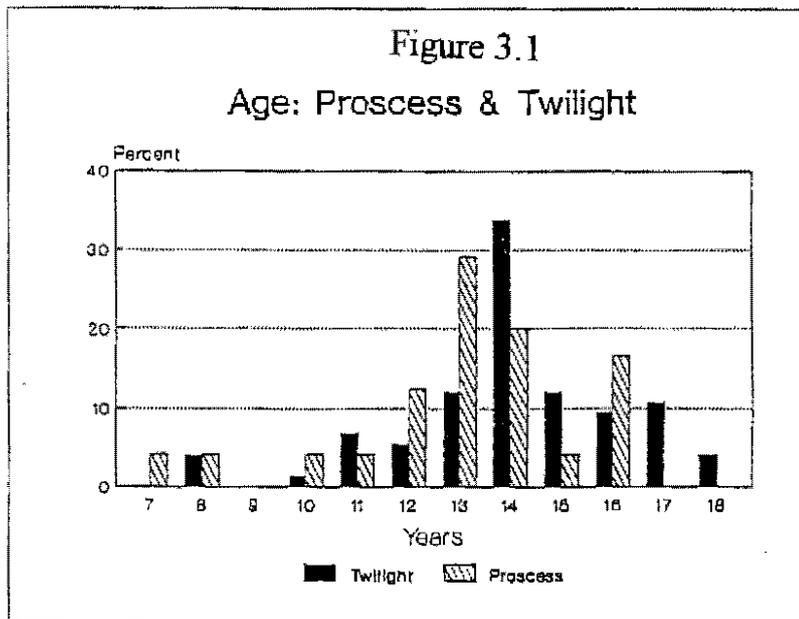
Generally, the ages of street children range between seven and eighteen years, with the average age being thirteen to fourteen years. This implies that a large number are early and middle adolescents.

At this stage of their lives, physical, psychological and social changes are taking place. It is a period of emotional and physical transition which could be confusing for the adolescent. In the case of street children, the journey towards physical and emotional development may be overshadowed by trauma and a fight for survival. This implies that the street child is *child* and *adult* simultaneously. These circumstances place constraints on the overall development of the street child.

3.6.1 Age at which Children Leave Home

In Sri Lanka, Hanssen (1996 : 252) found that most street children had left home between the ages of nine and twelve years. McNeill (1996 : 1) found street children in Istanbul to be as young as four years old. Unfortunately, she did not mention the upper age limit. A study in Kanpur, India revealed the following trend. Over sixty percent of the sample were eleven to sixteen years of age and 5,2 percent were below the age of six years (Pandey 1991 : 275).

In South Africa, Richter (1988 : 10) discovered the following trend in her sample of street children.



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4. *Proccess and Twilight are two shelters for street children in the Johannesburg area.*

An analysis of Richter's results suggests that children leave their homes for the streets at varying ages but especially between the ages of thirteen and sixteen years.

3.7 Physical Development and Demands

Vrey (1979 : 167) indicates that adolescence spans the period from 12 to 22 years of age. During this period new sensations, characteristics and physical developments make their appearance. These changes are new to the child and contribute to his developing self-concept.

The perceptible changes are in muscular strength, weight, bone structure, dermatology and secondary sexual characteristics precipitated by hormonal releases.

According to Vrey (1979 : 167) the physical self is more important during adolescence than any other stage of a person's life.

In her study of street children Richter (1988 : 25) examined aspects of physical development. In respect of height-for-age, investigations revealed that 21% of the sample displayed stunting attributed to chronic undernutrition, presumably during early childhood. When weight-for-age was investigated 53% of the sample emerged as underweight. This condition was attributed to inadequate nutrition during *street* living.

Although there is evidence of inadequate physical development among street children due to undernutrition, black children in South Africa were previously generally underweight due to their social conditions (Richter 1988 : 28).

During the researcher's field work, it was initially surprising when boys who appeared to be much younger declared to be much older. Subsequently it was assumed that they were either stating a lie or they had no clarity on their real age.

From the foregoing, it appears that impaired physical development among street children caused by undernutrition is prevalent. However, according to Richter (1988 : 54) this condition is not peculiar to street children only, but is evident among black children in general.

3.8 Psychological Development and Demands

During adolescence, the child has acquired a level of intellectual skills which enables him to find solutions to problems. At the same time he is critical of people and the world around him. Within this volatile milieu the adolescent seeks to entrench and shape his own identity which often gives rise to much conflict between adolescents and their parents.

The home environment remains a prominent determinant in the child's development because education takes place during the stabilisation of the child's relations with his parents. They confront him with norms which encompass all facets of his life. This enables him to develop sound attitudes towards himself. Habits such as personal hygiene, good manners and etiquette are reinforced by means of encouragement and praise until they are assimilated in the child. The parents are responsible for conveying the frame of reference in respect of the appropriate sex roles. The appearance of boys with feminine traits can often be attributed to the quality of the parent-child relationship. From inception, parents usually categorises certain acts as being good or bad. This evolves into ethical norms which the child internalizes. Eventually he either performs or refrains from executing certain acts in accordance with the meaning he has ascribed to a particular value as a norm.

The quality of the parent-child relationship remains the prerequisite, as well as the climate for parental support in a child's journey towards independence. A supportive home environment will ensure that the child is capable of forging satisfactory relations with peers and be able to conform with acceptable social norms thereby enhancing his assimilation into society. These developmental tasks are not easily attained in respect of street children.

It would be pertinent to consider Erik Erikson's theory of psychological development in the context of the street child at this point. Erikson as a psychoanalyst developed the only major theory of normal human development that covers the entire life span. He proposed eight stages of development throughout life, each of which is dependent on the successful resolution of a *crisis*. Each crisis is an issue that needs to be resolved at a particular point in development in order to achieve a balance between the two opposing alternatives. These crises according to Erikson (1963 : 27) are as follows and the manner in which each crisis is resolved or unresolved will have important implications on personality development.

3.8.1 Crisis One : Trust versus Mistrust (birth to approximately eighteen months)

During this stage, reliable care is the fundamental requirement for the successful resolution of this crisis. The child who is protected, given regular feeds and kept comfortable will develop trust in his mother. The child with trust in his mother will be able to let her out of his sight because he is certain of her return. This trust in his mother is expanded to include others whom he will learn to trust or mistrust.

In the lives of street children poverty may exclude a climate of reliability and comfort. The mother may be absent due to work commitments, leaving the child in the care of older siblings or relatives. The cold and unpredictable environment of substitute care tends to distort the *resolution of trust against mistrust*.

3.8.2 Crisis Two :Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt (eighteen months until three years)

Where the sense of trust has been established, children will begin exploring their environment, using newly acquired language and psychomotor skills. They will also learn about autonomy and their personal limitations. A healthy sense of doubt will enable children to set realistic limits while the development of shame will enable them to distinguish between right and wrong. Parental involvement at this stage should be moderate because excessive control inhibits the child's autonomy while diminished control may result in feelings related to compulsive control.

In the homes of street children where pedagogic neglect, excessive discipline and deprivation usually exists, they will be deprived of a supportive environment and as such the child will find it difficult to realise his potential and the extent of his limitations. Such circumstances will make it impossible for a child to develop a healthy concept of autonomy and shame

3.8.3 Crisis Three : Initiative versus Guilt (three years to six years)

At this point, children need to be able to achieve a balance between conflict and the planning and execution of activities against the guilt associated with what the child finds desirable. Once the child learns how to regulate these aspects of his personality he will be in a position to develop a sense of responsibility, and at the same time still be able to experience the joys of life. Where excessive guilt develops, initiative is stifled and free expression of the personality prevented.

In the case of the street child, his circumstances are characterised by poverty and deprivation and lack opportunities for initiative. In these circumstances the difficulties experienced by parents of street children often lead to problems such as alcohol abuse and marital discord. These conditions may serve to reinforce feelings of excessive guilt in the child, which may result in an inadequate resolution of the crisis between initiative and guilt.

3.8.4 Crisis Four : Industry versus Inferiority (six years to twelve years)

During this stage children need to expand their cultural knowledge and skills. Productivity and competence become important values alongside the child's awareness of the scope of his learning needs. Children who feel inferior to their peers usually retreat to the safety of the family. This may be accompanied by diminished cognitive development. Similarly, children who are obsessed with the importance of being industrious may neglect emotional aspects of their development.

Street children usually face the possibility of an inadequate resolution of this crisis because when they experience emotions of inferiority, they cannot turn to the "warmth of a family", because familial harmony and warmth is lacking. Conditions such as large families, absent fathers and poverty serves to create tension and promote rejection. Therefore, instead of turning to their families for comfort children in these circumstances tend to run away from home in confusion or with the intention of seeking 'a more amenable lifestyle' which is often life on the streets.

3.8.5 Crisis Five : Identity versus Role Diffusion (twelve years to twenty years)

According to Erikson (in Mussen et al. 1990 : 621), adolescence is a stage where the child is beset by sudden changes in their bodies causing considerable bewilderment. These transformations may be the cause for much confusion, giving rise to phenomena such as hero worship, childish impulsiveness and intolerance towards others. Falling in love is usually an attempt to clarify the adolescent's identity. "By becoming intimate with another the adolescent views the reflections of his own identity with that of his loved one. This helps in the clarification of the self" (Papalia 1985 : 452).

Where the adolescent is successful in developing a sense of identity he will be able to plan his future roles. Failure in developing a sense of identity results in role confusion which is accompanied by uncertainty about oneself, one's role and one's position in society.

Street children by this stage are already streetwise. In most cases they have become marginalised due to rejection, deprivation and abuse. Such children are not ready for responsibilities and a place in society. They have to forage in bins and beg on the streets in order to survive. Their unstable lives are devoid of intimacy and love. Instead of achieving their basic milestones in life such as education, careers and an identity, street children are usually alienated and caught up in drug abuse.

Although the sixth, seventh and eight stages do not apply strictly to the context of this study because these stages are applicable to adults, nevertheless, they will be discussed for completeness.

3.8.6 Crisis Six : Intimacy versus Isolation (twenty to twenty five years)

This stage is usually reached in the early twenties. At this stage the individual is recognised as being an adult. His sense of identity is clearly defined and his interests more stable than it was in stage five. During this stage the individual begins to settle down in his occupation, relationships and in his community. The individual's sense of intimacy, consisting of being close to others, caring and loving becomes entrenched if his identity is firmly established. This is necessary because to be able to share oneself, one must be sure who and what one is. Individuals who feel threatened by intimacy are usually incapable of healthy interpersonal relationships.

This leads to feelings of isolation. People who deal successfully with the intimacy versus isolation crisis will develop the ability of being able to offer love as well as being receptive to it.

Individuals who originate from an environment characterised by rejection, deprivation and conflict will find it difficult to resolve the crisis of intimacy versus isolation. Street children, as individuals who originate from such circumstances are more likely to experience difficulties with interpersonal relationships.

3.8.7 Crisis Seven : Generativity versus Stagnation (twenty five to sixty five years)

Usually by age forty people face a need for generativity, which is a concern towards establishing and guiding the next generation. This is usually expressed through having and nurturing one's own children, or any other creative work aimed at their development and survival. In many instances generativity is expressed by the individual's participation in volunteer and civic activities.

Generativity can be counterbalanced by stagnation, where the individual is self-centered and incapable of focusing on others. In cases where this crisis is unresolved, it could lead to obsessive generativity where the person leads an existence of an "*ultra good samaritan*", or an existence which is stagnant and sterile.

It is possible that maladjustment in street children leads to an imbalance in their development causing an unsatisfactory resolution of the crisis between generativity and stagnation. This could be a possible reason for the high crime rate in South Africa. People who do not perceive their lives as being meaningful and of value, would find it easier to succumb to degradation and crime, because they have nothing to lose, in comparison to people who perceive their existence as meaningful and therefore, resist a change for the worse, which is stagnation.

3.8.8 Crisis Eight : Ego Integrity versus Despair (Sixty five years and over)

It is during old age that the individual is able to realise his niche in the universal order. He perceives his life as coinciding with a segment of history. This enables him to face the phenomenon of death with greater equanimity. This attitude is representative of a sense of integrity which has been achieved by becoming reconciled to the natural process of life which incorporates triumphs, disappointments and eventually a terminal point.

In contrast, a person who has been unable to achieve ego integrity, is likely to view his life in terms of failure and shortcomings. According to Gerdes (1988 : 67), in such a situation the individual would display an attitude where ,“All the frustrations of life would terminate in feelings of despair associated with regret for what might have been.”

Although no study has been focused on later life of street children in South Africa, interviews with former street children who are now adults do corroborate Erikson's findings. They have indicated that they regret having left home, taken drugs and rejected education. The life on streets is considered as a 'futile existence' and they would not recommend street life to anyone.

3.8.9 Erikson's Theory in Context of the Street Child : A Commentary

Erikson's theory is useful in helping to explain the maladjustment pathologies in street children, especially during the phase when youth search for an identity. According to Erikson as cited by Mussen et al. (1990 : 622) the adolescent's search for identity can go wrong due to *premature foreclosure* or as a result of *indefinite extension*.

Identity foreclosure is an interruption in the process of identity formation. It is a premature fixing of one's self-image to the detriment of other inherent abilities. Youth whose identities are prematurely foreclosed tend to be approval oriented. These individuals base their self esteem on recognition by others. This results in high respect for authority, being less thoughtful and reflective, but more stereotype and superficial (Mussen et al. 1990 : 622 -624).

Identity confusion is prevalent in adolescents who are incapable of developing a clear sense of identity. These adolescents cannot 'find themselves' and tend to be 'loose and unattached' (Mussen et al 1990 : 621). Adolescents in this category find it difficult to develop consistent loyalties and attachments thereby creating the possibility for identity confusion which inevitably leads to low self esteem and immature moral reasoning.

Such individuals tend to be impulsive, disorganised and only capable of superficial relationships that are never lasting. Although generally dissatisfied with their parent's way of life, they have difficulty making a success of their own.

The street child is prone to deviant identity formation because of the role confusion experienced in the home. Negative parent child relationships alongside social marginalisation leaves the street child with poor and limited adult roles for his frame of reference. Consequently he has limited opportunity for identity formation. In the absence of a supportive home environment the "stress and storms" of adolescence only serves to confuse the developing child further, leading to escapist behaviour. This escapist behaviour is the prime cause for the high incidence of gravitation towards street life during this phase of development as seen by the declaration of Schurink et al. (1993 : 84), "Many street children leave their homes between the ages of eleven and fifteen years."

The theory put forward by Erikson (1968), as cited by Mussen et al. (1990 :622-625) showing that as children develop, numerous problems could develop within them, is supported by Richter (1988 : 58). She states that about a third of the subjects in her sample of street children suffered some form of moderate or severe psychological disturbance. The indicators of this condition were depression, withdrawal, lack of trust, anxiety and repression. Consequently Richter was of the opinion that these children (boys in this case) were in need of psychological counselling. This supports the assumption that problems within the child are also contributory factors to the street child problem.

3.9 Concluding Remarks

According to Schurink et al (1993 : 85), "there can be little doubt that a child's environmental and family circumstances can play a role in the reason for the child's gravitation towards the street."

In South Africa social transformation has reshaped the traditional family pattern and its values. This has given rise to the predominance of smaller, isolated and vulnerable family units. The parents as heads of the family units are forced to embrace the demanding responsibilities of the competitive workplace leaving little time for their parental duties. This has eroded their ability to provide a warm and supportive family environment for their children.

Furthermore, as changes continue on almost a daily basis in South Africa new concepts such as affirmative action and equitable educational provision arise. These policies overwhelm both parents and children alike and only serve to usher in related problems such as the 'anti-child climate', 'high density living', 'social isolation', 'psychological problems' and 'economic difficulties'. In an attempt at finding socio-educational solutions to these problems one becomes aware that a multifaceted approach is necessary because the etiological factors operate in the school, the home and even the child himself. This perception is inevitable because the child does not live in isolation but interacts within various social structures, societal institutions, cultures and subcultures (Loubser 1997 : 24-34).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE STREET CHILD PHENOMENON IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 Introduction

In this country the 1980's were greeted with a sudden growth in public awareness towards the plight of the street child. Researchers applied their minds to the problem and the media responded by highlighting the circumstances of street children. Despite this the problem has not diminished but seems to be on the increase. Media reports from 1989 to the present indicate that the street child problem in South Africa shows no sign of abatement, (Reader's Digest 1989 : 19-21 ; South Coast Herald 1997 : 3).

Street children as victims of poverty may be observed huddled in shop doorways, sleeping on cardboard sheets along pavements and even sniffing glue to ease away their misery. This serves as a reminder that the street child phenomenon is a global problem to which South Africa is no stranger (Reader's Digest 1989 : 19).

South Africa cannot claim ignorance of the street child phenomenon because it is a reality which greets us on television, stares at us out of newspapers and confronts us on the streets.

The reasons why children take to the streets in this country are complex and distinguished broadly as attributable to "*push*" and "*pull*" factors. Pull factors are : the desire to earn money, to be independent, to experience the excitement and glamour of living in the city. Push factors are: poverty, the international trend of urbanisation, political violence, disintegration of the traditional family, failure at school, the collapse of alternative care facilities and the search for additional income (Fall 1986 : 47-53).

It is impossible to determine the exact number of street children, but it is estimated that approximately 10 000 children are living in the streets in South Africa (Unicef 1993 : 20).

The intention of this chapter is to provide an overview of the extent of the street child problem in South Africa with the desire to arrive at suitable recommendations to address the problem. In the case of the former, attention will be given to the etiological factors, the life of the child on the streets, as well as hazards facing street children. In the case of the latter, attention will be devoted to possible micro and macro level problems with the intention of addressing them.

4.2 Causes of the problem

In the preceding chapter, the family dynamics in respect of the street child problem was examined. This exercise revealed trends that suggest that social life in South Africa and the rest of the world has changed drastically during the last decades. Technological, industrial, demographic and economic development and change have had both negative as well as positive impressions on family life. The positive influences are increasing levels of civilization, social prosperity and employment opportunities while the negative impacts are poverty, poor and overpopulated living conditions due to the emergence of slums and separation of parents from families due to migrant labour contracts (Engelbrecht 1994 : 7-34).

On the one hand, the improved financial circumstances of certain families paved the way to better housing, health and educational facilities which are the ingredients for social stability and development. On the other hand people were also exposed to poverty, poor living conditions and unemployment which led to the breaking up of marriages and disruptions of family life (Engelbrecht 1994 : 7-34).

The above circumstances have made children vulnerable to what is described as a hostile environment. As a result of this some children are easily lured into the street culture where they have to contend with insufficient food, shelter and care.

According to Schurink et al. (1993 : 108-109), in South Africa specific circumstances in the family are capable of creating a negative environment which cause children to abandon their homes. These are :

- (i) Single parenthood
- (ii) Family violence and excessive discipline
- (iii) Illegitimacy
- (iv) Poverty

With the above dynamics in mind, there are various models proposed to explain causes of the street child phenomenon. Hanssen (1996 : 256) proposes a triphase model where he talks about a preliminary stage, the acting out stage and the consolidating stage. Schurink et al. (1993 : 108) presents a tri-factorial model as well. This model identifies the following factors :

- (i) Macro level factors : these are factors within the community and include aspects such as low wages, school boycotts and urbanisation.
- (ii) Meso level factors : these are factors which exist within the family and give rise to the street child problem. Operational factors in this domain are single parent families, family violence and disintegration of family life.
- (iii) Micro level factors : this refers to factors within the children themselves. Contributory factors in this category include aspects such as feelings of inferiority on account of poverty, a need for personal attention, love for adventure and a need to be free (Schurink et al. 1993 : 108).

4.3 Economic Conditions in South Africa as an Etiological Factor.

Economic hardship in South Africa is on the increase and accompanied by a high crime rate, which together tend to destabilise communities. According to Unicef (1993 : 86) the present social situation in South Africa is characterised by economic recession, political uprisings, insecurity and violence which have a negative effect on the ability of most South African families to meet the developmental needs of their children in the social, affective, psychological and intellectual spheres.

Economic recession in South Africa has meant retrenchment, high unemployment and large scale impoverishment among all population groups. Poverty alone can inhibit the proper actualisation of a child's potential and cause experiential deficits, paving the way for possible premature school leaving (Booyse et al. 1995 : 34).

When children live in the densely populated industrial areas and 'squatter camps' around the country, they are not only exposed to the ravages of poverty but also the horrors of violence and murder which in many cases leave them homeless and orphaned. Often families inclusive of children flee from these circumstances and usually end up on the streets.

Unrest conditions such as these in townships has caused the street child syndrome in South Africa to escalate (Boooyse et al. 1995 : 41).

“The parents of street children are not always able to support them financially. Poverty leads to a tense family atmosphere, which is projected into the parent-child relationship” (Le Roux 1994 : 69). Difficulties like these cause children to move into the streets where they can take control of their lives. Once they are on the streets the children have to take responsibility for their personal maintenance and well-being. In the street climate the immediate requirements are food, safety, companionship and shelter. The dangers facing them are violence, starvation, loneliness, alienation, the risk of arrest and disease. Under these circumstances the street child develops a pattern of socialisation which enables him/her to adjust to a life on the streets (Reed and Baali 1972 : 100).

Poverty is a major push factor of the street child phenomenon. In South Africa many blacks find themselves in disadvantaged economic circumstances which make them high risk families. According to Lahiff (1981); Steyn, Van Wyk and Le Roux (1987) as cited by Schurink et al. (1993 : 80), the following problems were identified in respect of economic deprivation :

- (i) Because of a lower income there is often a decrease in the living standard of a single parent family.
- (ii) A family must often move to a lesser environment.
- (iii) Employment is not always permanent and this leads to financial and emotional problems.
- (iv) Surviving parents often experience much stress, not only because of their financial situation but also as a result of emotional and physical demands placed on them.
- (v) Uncontrolled urbanisation and resultant unemployment cause negative living conditions in slums and squatter camps, which in turn has a negative influence on relationship formation in the family. This deprives the children of safety, security and guidance they need to develop adequately.

Economic hardship may impact on the child as follows :

- (i) A low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence.

- (ii) The child's individuality is disregarded.
- (iii) Interest in the child declines.
- (iv) Inconsistent and excessive discipline evokes antagonism in the child.

Economic factors have a profound influence on each member of the family which in turn affects the entire family unit. For example, in a family where both parents are alive but eke out a living as lowly paid labourers they are unable to pay school fees, purchase books and provide sufficient food. Furthermore, the father often abuses alcohol and assaults his children. In such a family the parent is frustrated and vents his feelings on his children by exercising excessive discipline. This results in a severely traumatised child who will seek to escape from his miserable situation (Wynn 1964 : 15 ; Reed and Baali 1972 : 102).

4.4 Family Circumstances

The preceding chapter hinted at the urban family as being highly vulnerable to the challenging circumstances posed by, economic demands, social isolation and its transformation from the extended to the nuclear mode. These circumstances present untenable experiences for children such that they are being referred to as a *threatened species* (Packard 1983 : 49). In the forthcoming sections attention will be given to some pertinent aspects of family circumstances in South Africa.

4.4.1 Single Parent Families

The single parent family is a demographic reality in South Africa and the incidence of this kind of family is growing to such an extent that it is becoming an institutionalised type of family unit. This family type is increasingly being referred to as an alternative type of family, and owes its rapid spread to the high divorce rate, among other reasons (Du Plessis 1994 : 19).

According to Steyn (1987 : 128) single parent families usually originate in four different circumstances. These are :

- (i) Where a marriage is legally dissolved by divorce.
- (ii) Where the marriage is still in force but one parent leaves the family.
- (iii) Where one of the parents dies.
- (iv) Where the parents are unmarried and the child is born out of wedlock.

Children born out of wedlock often experience developmental problems, which lead to social and emotional maladjustment. This is an added problem to the child in South Africa where society perceives the single parent family as “deviant” and a “social evil” (Du Plessis 1994 : 19).

Although there are variants of the single-parent family, they are all characterised by the following influences :

- * economic and emotional problems.
- * problems associated with family relationships and multiple role fulfilment.
- * problems arising due to contact with the deviant or previous spouse.

According to Williams (1988 : 4), there is a disharmonious educational climate which operates in most single parent families caused by the defection of one parent. This changed pattern of interaction between family members can result in the development of a poor self-image both in parent and child.

Considering the prevalence of single parent families in South Africa it is essential that the strengths of such a family type be exploited so that it can function in a manner that is beneficial to the child. For example :

- * The single parent community could arrange family activities designed to generate understanding and support among members.
- * A democratic and cooperative approach to problem solving can improve the affected child's sense of self worth.
- * Exposure to a variety of lifestyles can develop the affected child's sense of confidence.
- * Greater flexibility in quality time geared to allow more contact time with the child alleviates fears of being abandoned by the custodian parent.
- * Less tension, discord and hostility in the family will increase family solidarity and consistency.
- * Opportunities must be created for family members to share, become self-reliant and to be appreciated.

(Atlas 1981 : 15-19)

A large number of street children originate from single parent families. This family type can assume various forms such as : estrangement between husband and wife, divorce, death of a parent and unmarried mothers.

According to Pringle (1975 : 126-128), children born out of wedlock are known to exhibit developmental problems such as poor speech, poor reading skills and a limited general knowledge.

It appears that the single parent family can lead to social and emotional maladjustment in the child. Where the child is faced with this problem in tandem with poverty then this situation is likely to drive the child onto the streets. Accordingly, it is necessary to consider the salient features of single parent families, which are as follows :

(i) Divorce

In the Natal Mercury a High Court motion roll is published every day. The number of divorces on the roll was enumerated over a week. The following pattern emerged :

FIGURE 4.1

Date	Number of Divorces
25/8/97	15
26/8/97	17
27/8/98	14
28/8/98	14
29/8/98	16
TOTAL	76

The above indicates that approximately 76 divorces takes place every week in the Durban and Coastal Region. In one year the number will be approximately 52 times more or 3 952 divorces. This high divorce rate is certain to affect thousands of children in every such region of South Africa

(ii) Unmarried Mothers

Children being born out of wedlock are referred to as illegitimate. This term itself is reflective of the stigma attached to this group of children. Usually children born out of wedlock display negative attributes such as limited general knowledge, poor speech and numeracy capabilities and irregular school attendance (Schurink et al 1993 : 80).

(iii) Death of a Parent

Death is always a traumatic experience. In the case of children it can cause numerous negative tendencies such as health problems, juvenile delinquency, depression, schizophrenia and even suicide (Schurink et al 1993 : 79).

In the case of infants and children until the age of 5 years the permanency of death is not yet conceptualised. Children in this category may search for the deceased parent and become angered in their failure to locate the missing parent. This usually results in quiescence and distancing (Schurink et al 1993 : 79).

Children between five and eight years of age, generally have a well developed concept of death. This category of children usually keep the deceased parent alive in their fantasy world. They may also keep the death secret because they do not wish to differ from other children and families (Schurink et al 1993 : 79).

In instances where the child is between eight and twelve years of age they have a well defined concept of death. The death of a parent leaves them with emotions of sorrow and helplessness. Common responses by these children are to blame the surviving spouse and even the development of phobias towards darkness and illness (Schurink et al. 1993 : 79).

Adolescents are aware that they have lost a loved one who was supposed to provide care and support. In such instances the child may respond with feelings of indignation, anger and anxiety because his world has changed. Children in these circumstances become confused due to the emotional overload and if they suppress their grief then problems such as dependency, juvenile delinquency, depression, schizophrenia and even suicide may arise (Schurink et al 1993 : 79).

In interviews with street children, the case of Mandla stands out. He lost both parents and was himself scarred in a horrific motor accident at the age of twelve years. There was no one to care for and nurture him after the tragedy. He was forced to assume responsibility for himself, which he did. Although overtly independent and accomplished, he has missed out on his childhood and seeks attention, recognition and warmth. The death of his parents has been the cause of his being on the streets instead of being at home.

Data on street children indicate that single parenthood is usually the norm and not the exception. In the single parent family, children's feelings of anxiety, worry, grief, anger, loneliness and rejection tend to be worse than that of children in dual parent families (Schurink et al. 1993 : 80).

4.4.2 High Crime Rate in South Africa, Excessive Discipline, and Family Violence

*** Crime in South Africa**

Against the background of family violence and excessive discipline, a high crime rate in South Africa is also an aggravating factor in respect of the street child problem. Although not involved in a conventional war, political rivalry has extended into a type of civil war similar to that of Rwanda, but on a smaller scale. "Between February 1991 and December 1993 approximately thirteen thousand people died as a result of crime propagated by political motives" (The Star 30 1993 : 2).

The crime wave in South Africa has escalated to such an extent that South Africa is referred to as the crime capital of the world. According to a "Sunday Tribune" report, (1997 : 10), "With the coming of democracy, international crime organisations started investigating the possibilities of expanding their operations in South Africa." The ominous tone of this report has since developed into explosive reports of crime which has been splashed across the pages of virtually every newspaper in South Africa, everyday. Typical headlines in South Africa these days are : "Attacked and beaten up is normal work for this policewoman" (Sunday Tribune 1997 : 10); "Six robbers killed in failed cash heists" (The Natal Mercury 1998 : 1) and "Criminals paradise" (Sunday Times KZN 1998 : 5).

Crime in South Africa did not develop overnight and it is misleading to suggest that criminals flooded this country after democracy. Criminals were always resident, but with the advent of democracy these criminals became more liberal in the activities subsequent to the abolition of the death penalty and reforms to criminal law in South Africa. According to the Sunday Tribune (1998 : 11) every hour in South Africa : three people are murdered, six are raped, one car is highjacked, fifteen cars are stolen and forty five homes are burgled.

The high crime rate being experienced in South Africa currently, can be ascribed to two reasons :

- (i) It is a tangible social consequence of poverty. Where there is acute poverty, where work is difficult to find and where society is in a process of upheaval, people are more likely to rob others to gain a living, to make ends meet or sometimes out of sheer frustration (Wilson and Ramphela 1989 : 152).
- (ii) After democracy new legislation which incorporated a Bill of Rights protecting the rights of the individual was enacted. This reformulation of South African law protects individual rights to such an extent that bail laws have become ineffectual, lenient sentences are imposed by the courts, parole is granted easily to serious offenders and the death sentence was abolished.

These circumstances seemed to create a favourable climate for criminal activity in South Africa, and South Africans, including judges have made numerous calls to have the death penalty reimposed in order to stem the tide of criminality sweeping across South African society. Of concern is the high level of crime against children. In 1996 the Child Protection Unit in South Africa dealt with 35 838 cases of crime against children. This represents an average increase of thirty six percent per year since 1993 (The Natal Mercury 1998 : 3).

Furthermore, at a school called Emseni Tower Primary it was found that one in ten girls attending this school was abused (Sunday Times 1997 : 7).

An alarming trend in crime is the use of children by adults to perpetuate crime. According to the "Daily News" (1998 : 1) a gang of professional housebreakers was captured by the Durban City Police.

The investigating officer was of the opinion that these gangsters were street children who operated under the instructions of adults and therefore, presented a threat to the community. It seems that South Africa always had the potential to develop a high crime rate. This is verified by an international comparison of crime rate which is as follows:

An international comparison of crime, 1979 (per one hundred thousand of population)

TABLE 4.1

<i>Category</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>South Africa</i>
Murder	6	1	27
Rape	11	n.a.	63
Robbery	379	27	178
Assault	278	176	1047

(Wilson and Ramphela 1989 : 153).

The above statistics indicate that South Africa has a higher crime rate than the United Kingdom and Germany. A high crime rate has far reaching implications for the communities exposed to it. In some instances, entire communities may live in fear and insecurity, for example, the community in Shobashobane on the lower south coast of Kwa Zulu Natal, practically live in fear after a rival political faction massacred members of this community on Christmas Eve in 1996 (South Coast Herald 1998 : 2).

The most disturbing feature of crime seems to be reflected in the suffering and loss, experienced by children who are affected. Family life may be disrupted after homes and schools are destroyed. Numerous children may lose and have lost their parents due to crime and are forced to survive as neglected orphans. The abnormal conditions perpetuated by crime are detrimental to children who may experience the loss of educational opportunities and family support. Children in these circumstances usually leave school prematurely, enter the informal workforce and even live on the streets.

Street children are also part of the crime wave. They are usually manipulated by unscrupulous adults who encourage these children to break into cars, pickpocket shoppers and even burgle homes. The major proportion of the proceeds from these unlawful activities are usually retained by the adults. Such circumstances serve to perpetuate the negative circumstances of the street child.

* **Excessive Discipline**

The child needs to regard the home as a safe haven. A supportive home environment enables the child to feel confident thereby allowing him to *venture* into the world, because in the event of his being unsuccessful in his ventures he has a *safe retreat*.

It is the duty of parents not only to give their children this safe retreat through guidance and support, but also to enforce discipline when necessary. Numerous approaches to discipline have been identified. According to Labuschagne (1985 : 28-29), indifferent discipline, inconsistent discipline, spoiling and excessive discipline could be applied. It is essential that discipline should be applied fairly and consistently in order to help the child to develop a positive self-concept.

In the home where appropriate discipline is applied the following dynamics are usually identified :

- (i) **Respect**
The child is usually treated with respect. This serves to enhance child's personal self-respect. If a child is humiliated, embarrassed and abused this creates disrespect for himself and others.
- (ii) **Warmth**
The child is made to feel important, accepted and valued.
- (iii) **Control**
Firm action by parents when necessary will ensure that the child knows what is permissible and acceptable. This helps to promote a positive self-concept. Insufficient control in the family may promote low self-esteem (Vrey 1979: 119).
- (iv) **Freedom**
The child must feel free to venture and even make mistakes without fear of reprisal. This promotes the development of self-esteem and enables the child to face up to challenges with confidence.

In homes where excessive discipline is applied warmth, freedom and the ability to face up to challenges in life are usually absent. Instead children may develop numerous negative reactions and feelings. Some of these are as follows :

- (i) it could inhibit the development of the child's personality
- (ii) it could have a degrading effect on the child
- (iii) the self-confidence of the child may be diminished
- (iv) the child could develop animosity towards the parent who applies excessive discipline.
- (v) the child could lie or cheat for protection.
- (vi) the child could develop certain pathological defects such as stammering, anxiety and depression.
- (vii) according to Reed and Baali (1972 : 102) and Venter (1977 : 8), excessive discipline could also cause the child to abandon his/her home and choose the streets as his/her home.

Excessive discipline seems to be an important etiological factor of the street child problem in South Africa. This fact must be considered when assistance programmes are being designed at the meso-level.

* **Family Violence**

Family violence has a similar effect as excessive discipline. Where parents quarrel and inflict physical harm on other family members it causes a degeneration of the *family atmosphere*.

Many street children originate from structurally disadvantaged African and Coloured homes where the living conditions created personal and emotional difficulties. In Johannesburg it was found that a large proportion of the street children had suffered some form of nuclear family upheaval due to death, divorce or abandonment. In some cases street children had come from single-parent families where the parent was unable to maintain them. There were also cases where children reported instances of physical and sexual abuse by parents, step-parents and family members. These circumstances resulted in psychological conflict which prompted children to leave home for life on the streets (Hickson and Gaydon 1989 : 86-89).

Political violence caused by antagonism between rival parties in townships exposed children to intimidation and brutality. Some chose to escape the tense situation and moved to cities where they ended up on streets. This tendency is confirmed by Peacock (1989 : 3) when he declares that in South Africa political violence and a lack of occupational opportunities in former black townships attracted many teenagers to city areas where they desired to escape societal unrest or needed to supplement their family income. This resulted in loss of parental control which predisposed children to street life.

The discussion in this chapter suggests that there is adequate reason to believe that several negative factors within the family and community can cause children to abandon their homes for a life on the streets.

4.5 Some Factors Within the Child as a Cause of the Street Child Problem.

4.5.1 Personality as a Contributory Factor

The term *personality* is used to refer to “ *the sum of intrinsic characteristics, traits and consistent attitudes that identify an individual as unique*” (Van den Aardweg 1993 : 170).

Usually, we consider personality in the manner that people present themselves to us. For example, people who are friendly, co-operative, and trustworthy are typified as people with good personalities. According to Coombs as cited by Van den Aardweg (1993 : 170), the adequate personality comprises :

- (i) Seeing oneself positively, accepting oneself as important, successful, esteemed, of integrity.
- (ii) Looking at oneself realistically and honestly.
- (iii) Show perception of and empathy with others.

Personality must be considered as a “global construct referring to the whole person in relation to his life-world” (Van den Aardweg 1993 : 170). Since personality refers to the global construct of the child it cannot be divorced from his emotional, social and cognitive development. Children who have a poor self-esteem, lack enthusiasm, are deceitful, selfish and do not have a realistic perception of themselves are unable to interact favourably with teachers, friends and even family members.

This gives rise to conflict and antagonism between teachers and children or parents and children. Where the child is already experiencing hardships due to poverty and other disadvantages, such a child will find it easy to drop-out of school or leave home and eventually end up on the street.

4.6 The Streetwise Experience

Millions of street children exist in loneliness, without affection, education and assistance. They are left to survive on their own wits. As a result they are exposed to conditions such as violence, deprivation, abuse and neglect. They coalesce into gangs for companionship, as well as to fend off violence. Nevertheless, they are children who have been denied protection, comfort and opportunities. They are a marginalised group because of their pathetic circumstances. Tomorrow they will be men and women - a future generation who will be required to foster peace, love and create prosperity. It would be unrealistic to expect them to respond to these challenges in view of their circumstances (Le Roux 1994 : 65).

Le Roux seems to suggest that street children do not benefit from the streetwise experience, and they should be removed from the streets in order to be reintegrated into society. However, researchers are divided in respect of the question whether street life is really harmful ?. According to Hines (1988 : 236), “ There is nothing intrinsically harmful about many forms of street existence.”

Aptekar (1988 : 99), states that street existence need not be equated with diminished developmental opportunity. From his study in Colombia, Aptekar concludes : “ It may well be that street life, rather than taking away cognitive growth actually adds to it.”

In South Africa, research has also left room for controversy concerning the implications of the streetwise experience. In 1988 (Richter : 32), administered four psychometric tests (Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices, The Beery Developmental Test, The WISC Mazes and The Halstead Categories), among ninety seven Johannesburg street children in order to determine their level of cognitive development. The level of performance of ninety seven street children showed no significant differences with that of ordinary black scholars. In addition to this, between 8 and 31 percent fell within the American, British and white South African norm (Richter 1988 : 32-34).

From the above it seems that street children as a group cannot be labelled as intellectually deficient. However, it is important to realise that the longer that street children remain on the street, the lower their abilities become for successful formal education. Lowered levels of motivation, acquisition of behaviour and habits which suppress sustained concentration and cognitive retardation following on drug abuse are factors which frustrate formal schooling (Van Zyl 1994 : 13).

Accordingly, one must be guarded against incorrect classification of street children due to prejudiced or emotional perceptions because this may eventually jeopardise assistance programmes that are based on incorrect information.

4.6.1 Health and Personal Care

The street children are often victims of abuse and exploitation. This leads to poor mental and physical health. In her investigations, Richter (1988 : 58) found as many as a third of the subjects in her sample to have suffered from some form of moderate or severe psychological disturbance. The problems that street children had to contend with were depression, withdrawal, lack of trust, anxiety and repression. Accordingly, Richter (1988 : 58), expressed the opinion that any programme designed to help the street children should include psychological counselling programmes to help them deal with their problems.

Even though there are approximately ten thousand children of the street and approximately one million children on the street in South Africa (Swart 1994) as cited by Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994 : 169-174), the majority of these children are workers and spend substantial time on streets. South African streets are violent and hazardous to developing children. Consequently, children of the street are more prone to hunger, violence and exploitation. They are some times raped and often forced into survival sex (Levenstein 1996 : 46). According to Richter (1990 : 14-15) most children of the street are exposed to drugs and many sniff glue, they are exposed to health hazards and medical services are not readily available to them.

Furthermore, in South Africa, street children are exposed to physical developmental risks due to insufficient shelter, safety, nutrition and specific health risks associated with untreated illnesses and injuries, glue sniffing and sexual activities (Donald and Swart-Kruger 1994 : 170).

According to Gerbers (1990) as cited by Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994 : 170), health risks are of particular concern to the physical development of street children.

In terms of the health status of street children in South Africa, they are vulnerable to a range of relatively severe risks such as exposure to violence, physical abuse and inadequate access to health facilities, such that their development is severely prejudiced (Donald and Swart-Kruger 1994 : 170). Faced with these circumstances the street child's adaptations at coping with street life might be effective in the short term, but the long term risks remain and will plague the street child's overall development (Richter 1991 : 5-7).

4.6.2 Generation of Income

In many countries, including South Africa, there is a growing urbanisation which is accompanied by migration and breakdown of traditional family structures. These factors create a vulnerable group of urban street children, the majority of whom work within the informal sector to survive (Venkateswaran 1994 : 46-58). The street child population in South Africa consists of both children on the street and children of the street. In the case of the former it seems that they often work because, firstly the environment at work seems potentially safer than being left alone at home. Secondly, the need for them to be economically active arises out of the low individual income in the family, which necessitates financial contribution by every family member at the expense of their education (Richter 1990 : 14 ; Cerrans 1992 : 11-12). In the case of the latter they have no choice but to generate an income for their survival even if it means contravening the law (Schurink 1994 : 19-20).

The street as a working environment, exposes the child to marginalised activities such as street vending, begging, theft, robbery and prostitution. Their work is frequently unrecognised or even denied and they are often exposed to exploitation and exhausting activities (Franchet 1996 : 261-265).

According to Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994 : 170), the street child develops ingenuity in income generation and the acquisition of food and clothing under the most difficult circumstances. In some instances this is perceived as an opportunistic characteristic which amounts to nothing less than a survival strategy. However, the real tragedy is that these children claim that they are better off under these conditions than they were at home (Cockburn 1988 : 145-149).

South Africa is a developing country and as the cities grow, so will the number of street children, and associated socio-educational problems (Le Roux 1994 : 65). Under these circumstances there exists a central and pervasive paradox : “ On the one hand there is evidence of developmental risks and vulnerability across emotional, social, cognitive and educational areas of development while there is equal evidence of resourcefulness, adaptability and coping in each of these areas” (Donald and Swart-Kruger 1994 : 170).

Currently, both developed and developing countries are facing the problem of street children who in most cases escape attention because they are self-employed and wish to remain on the periphery of society. This creates the impression that there is no grasp of the problem, let alone the development of steps to address it effectively.

4.6.3 Crime in their Daily Lives

The street child is different from the *normal* child because their needs and circumstances are usually desperate. Consequently street children have to develop skills and attitudes to survive. These survival techniques sometimes extend beyond the borders of lawfulness. During 1988 the street child problem became a discernible phenomenon in Durban's beachfront area. Hundreds of black children between the ages of eight and seventeen years appeared on the streets, where they made attempts at living and earning an income (Schurink 1994 : 19).

Most of the children described above engaged in activities which were unlawful to some degree. These were :

- (i) acting as unlicensed car parking attendants
- (ii) glue sniffing
- (iii) fighting amongst themselves with weapons such as knives and bricks
- (iv) urinating and defecating in public places
- (v) deliberately damaging vehicles when the owners declined to use their services
- (vi) use of banned drugs
- (vii) theft
- (viii) robbery
- (ix) assault
- (x) prostitution

Their criminal activities evoked fear and hostility in residents who demanded police intervention. The police response resulted in the street children perceiving the police as their enemy (Schurink 1994 : 24).

Although police intervene in response to complaints, they claim that they do not conduct a *witch hunt* or intend to harass the street children. They indicate that they have to act within the parameters of the Child Care Act, which at times frustrate their attempts at rehabilitating criminal children (Schurink 1994 : 24).

In recent times the police have adopted a humanistic approach towards street children. They attempt to monitor and even develop programmes to assist street children. For example in Durban the City Police formed the Street Child Unit to address the street child problem in their jurisdiction.

Although the attempts of the police are commendable in some instances it must be appreciated that the street child problem is not a *police problem*. It is a social welfare problem which has many off-shoots, one of them being crime (Schurink 1994 : 25). Therefore, by laying emphasis on the crimes perpetuated by street children one will be addressing the symptoms of the problem instead of its etiology.

4.7 Educating Street Children in South Africa

In a relevant study carried out by Richter (1988 : 34-38), it appears that the longer street children remain on the streets the less the likelihood of them furthering their education because of their tendency to “lose abilities” and “acquire handicaps”. The reasons for this trend was ascribed to factors such as loss of motivation, the acquisition of values, behaviours and habits antithetical to sustained effort and concentration. At the same time it must not be forgotten that some children may have gravitated onto streets because of their learning disabilities. Nonetheless, Richter (1988 : 38) emphasizes that for some boys their disabilities would preclude them from alternatives to street life in the absence of special help and remediation. The following graph represents part of Richter’s (1988 : 37) results :

Figure 4.2

Intellectual Performance Categories

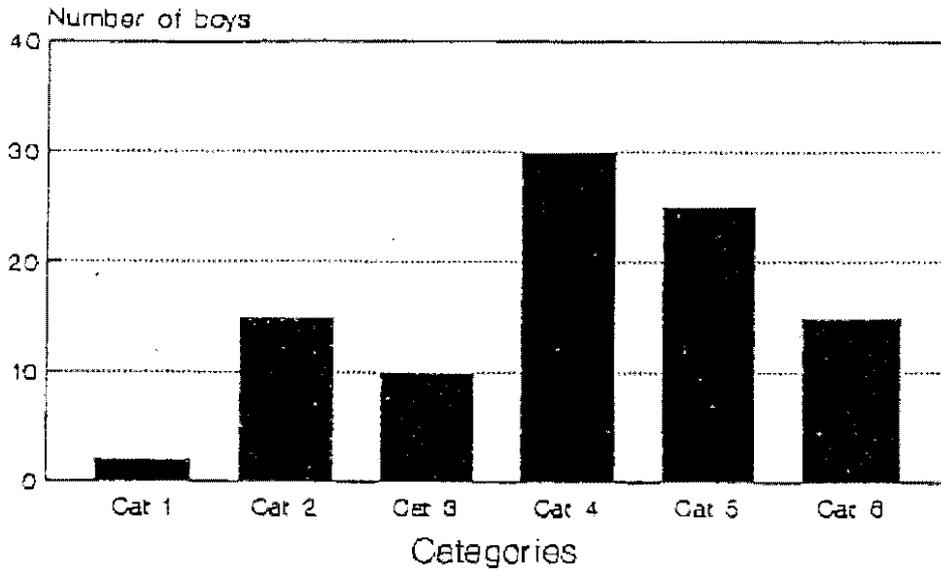


Table 4.2

TABLE - BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BOYS IN CATEGORIES 1 TO 6

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>MEAN YEARS SCHOOLING</i>	<i>STREET TIME</i>
Category 1 (N = 2)	10	4	4 months
Category 2 (N = 15)	12	3,5	18 months
Category 3 (N = 10)	12	4	12 months
Category 4 (N = 30)	14	4	12 months
Category 5 (N = 25)	14	4	15 months
Category 6 (N = 15)	16	4	2,5 years

The categorisation of intellectual capacities used by Richter (1988 : 35) in this investigation were as follows :

- Category 1 - Consistent scores on all four tests in the range of average performance by Western children of the same age.
- Category 2 - Consistent scores on all four tests in the range of low average to average performance by Western children of the same age.
- Category 3 - Consistent scores on at least three tests indicating a performance lag of three to four years behind chronological age.
- Category 4 - Consistent scores indicating a performance lag of five to six years behind chronological age.
- Category 5 - Scores indicating a performance lag of seven years behind chronological age.
- Category 6 - Scores indicating a performance lag of eight years or more behind chronological age.

The most important trend that emerges from Richter's (1988 : 36) investigations is that there is a lower level of performance on the part of older boys and boys "on the streets" for longer periods.

In another test conducted by Richter (1988 : 41), to investigate school readiness in street children the following results were obtained :

Table 4.3
School readiness on the ASB subtests

<i>Subtest</i>	<i>School Ready</i>	<i>Borderline</i>	<i>Not School Ready</i>
Perception	95 %	3 %	2 %
Spatial	37	45	18
Reasoning	84	10	6
Numerical	88	10	2
Gestalt	92	6	2
Coordination	83	10	7
Memory	84	7	9
Verbal comprehension	61	37	2

The data on page 108 indicates that the majority of the sample of street children were school ready (this means that the subjects were likely to pass at least the first year of schooling). However, Richter (1988 : 43) states that in the case of street children, educational decisions should not be based on the school readiness test alone because the child may appear 'bright' enough to benefit from formal schooling but, in reality he/she may be ill-prepared due to inadequate stimulation and inadequate emotional and physical development. This may result in failure from inception. Therefore, when results of tests are considered in isolation the perception may arise that street children are no different from 'ordinary' children. This is indeed a common misconception. Against this background, educational programmes for street children cannot be approached in a simplistic manner because there are numerous inherent aspects in the street child which demand an individualistic educational programme that must serve both developmental and remediation needs in the street child, especially during inception.

Since street children vary in age (range between seven to seventeen years) and have different levels of exposure to education it makes the task of structuring relevant educational programmes difficult.

Formal education is preferable, however, it is not practical to expect all street children to attend or succeed in the formal education system. The fact that some street children are already school drop-outs is reflective of their disillusionment with formal education. Other problems such as learning disabilities and maladjustment will require remedial education programmes.

Non-formal education programmes would be more appropriate for street children. Although the term *non-formal* is used it does not imply that the programmes should be hap-hazard and unstructured. Instead the programmes need to be multi-dimensional with emphasis on a variety of aspects such as :

- (i) vocational training
- (ii) literacy and numeracy
- (iii) communication
- (iv) school readiness / remedial programmes
- (v) problem solving skills
- (vi) socialisation skills

- (vii) survival skills
- (viii) counselling

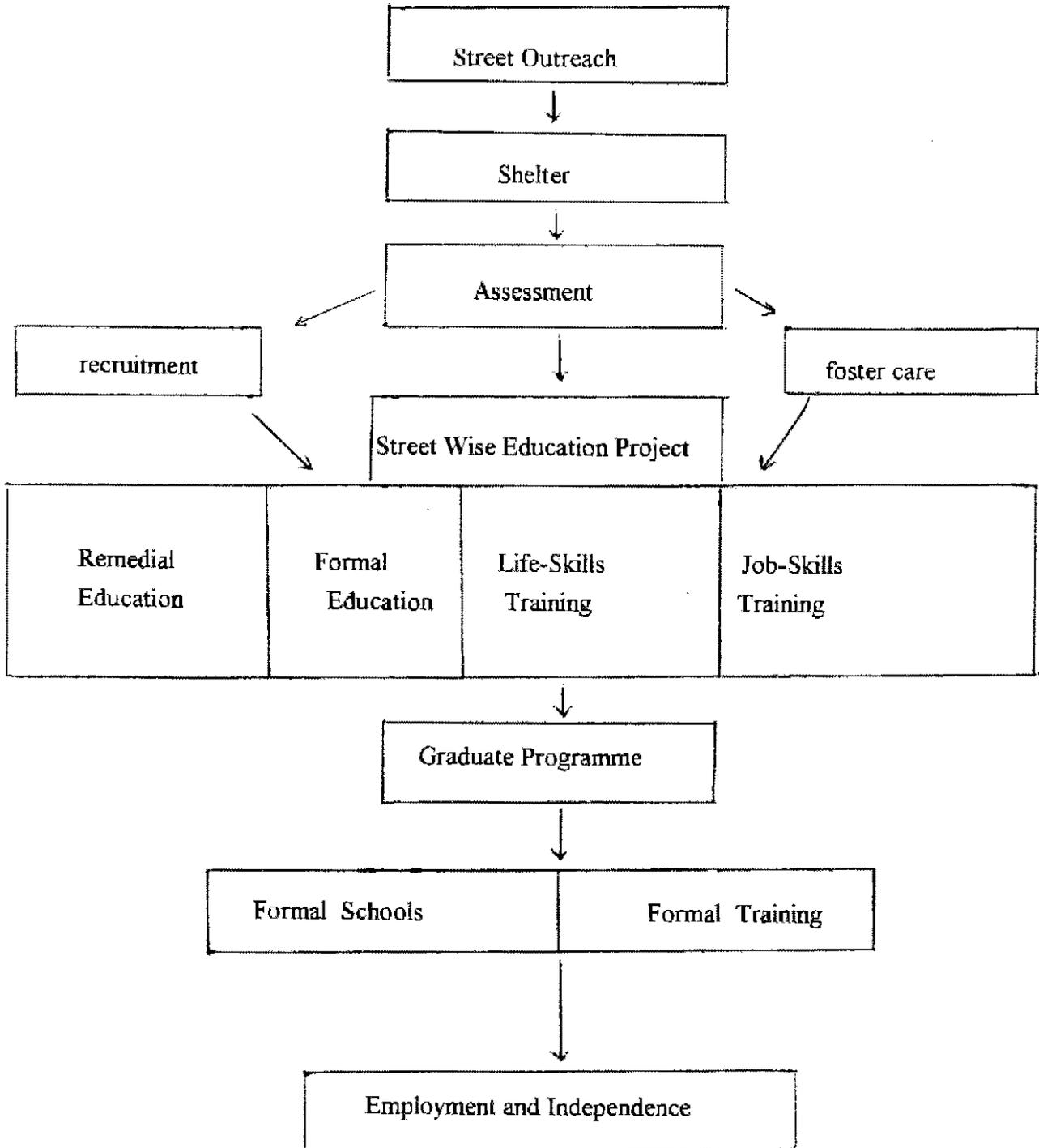
The programme should be directed towards either reintegration into the formal education system or geared towards furnishing the street child with marketable skills (Schurink 1994 : 38).

The present education system in South Africa is not designed to assist children in their street situation, therefore, programmes must be tailored to suit the needs of street children. This would entail, inter alia utilization of the services of street educators, training teachers to assist drop-outs, providing for vocational training, providing support services such as counselling for maladjusted children and enrichment programmes for children with learning difficulties.

From the foregoing it appears that street children have urgent educational needs because many leave school at the completion of grade four and thereafter they have limited access to education. A lack of education is certain to aggravate their pathetic circumstances. Therefore, a well designed educational programme which is supportive of street children will be a step in the right direction towards alleviating their educational deprivation.

Presently, the *Street - Wise Educational Programme* is one of the appropriate models that seeks to address the educational needs of street children. Le Roux (1994 : 64) explains the Streetwise model as follows, "Through relevant education the vicious circle in the children's lives is broken. There are four main focal points. Remedial programmes concentrated on numeracy and literacy, as well as on the general educational rehabilitation of children. Formal education follows remedial education. Life-skills training is undertaken by volunteers and includes religious instruction, health and hygiene education, sex education, drug and solvent abuse counselling, art therapy, drama therapy and numerous short courses throughout the year. Job-skills training, done with children, helps to instil a work ethos and develop concentration span. For older children these training programmes offer a measure of preparation for eventual work".

The Streetwise Model



(Le Roux 1994 : 66)

* **An Explanation of the Street-Wise Model**

The Street-wise approach has five important facets which are all directed at solving the street child problem in South Africa (Le Roux 1994 : 76-77). These are :

1. *Street Outreach*

This facet has two main objectives which are as follows :

- (i) To provide for the needs of children still on the streets by supplying them with food, warm clothes, medical care and protection against abuse.
- (ii) To advertise the other services offered by Street-Wise, such as education.

2. *Shelter*

The shelter provides more than just a roof over the child's head. Shelter staff are child care workers who create a substitute home environment, where recreational activities, informal guidance and developmental work is undertaken.

3. *Assessment*

Assessment is done in order to either reconcile the child with his/her home or to find suitable foster care for street children. It involves the following :

- (i) Sociological studies to ascertain family background and street life motives.
- (ii) Psychological studies to determine the negative effects of past experiences.
- (iii) Educational assessment to ascertain the child's level of cognitive development and educational achievements.

4. Street-Wise Education Project

The educational programmes offered by Street-Wise has received international acclaim because of its relevance to the street child. There are four focal points in the Street-Wise educational programme. They are :

- 4.1 Remedial Programmes which concentrate on numeracy, literacy and general rehabilitation of street children.
- 4.2 Formal Education follows remedial education and is focused towards accelerating the street child's educational development.
- 4.3 Life-Skills Training is usually undertaken by volunteers and includes religious education, health education, sex education, solvent abuse counselling, art therapy and drama therapy.
- 4.4 Job-Skills Training is done with all street children and is geared to develop a desire to value employment as a means of income generation.

5. Graduate Programme

This programme is designed to prepare street children for formal education. Once street children pass through the graduate programme, they are not abandoned , but may still enjoy continued support from this programme.

*** The Scope and Success of Street-Wise**

According to Le Roux (1994 : 67) who quotes Swart - Kruger (1993), the Street-Wise educational programme enjoys a low success rate because street children dislike restrictions, are averse to intervention and prefer a sense of autonomy and self-sufficiency that street life has to offer. Although similar problems are experienced by Khayaletu and other programmes in South Africa, it is not sufficient reason to abandon educational projects aimed at rehabilitating street children. There may be a handful of street children who may benefit from an education programme at a time, and this must be seen as a contribution towards addressing the street child problem and also as preventing a form of 'brain drain'. This refers to inadequate development of the aptitudes, abilities and talents inherent in street children. In instances where the academic potential and other skills of the street child are not identified and developed, then society is deprived of these resources.

Therefore, in the case of the street child, educational programmes should be deemed successful when each individual is given the opportunity to learn according to his/her interest and aptitude. "This would ensure a fulfilment of life, satisfaction and a yearning to succeed. In meeting his own needs and those of others, the individual helps to create a liberated society" (Mungazi 1985 : 204).

The streetwise model depicted above may not be the ideal because its success is dependent on community support and a commitment by the children themselves. Where street children are steeped in drugs and comfortable with the autonomy that street life offers, they would be reluctant to associate themselves with restrictions imposed by a structured programme.

Therefore, the Street-Wise programme has the necessary ingredients for success in that it identifies and seeks to redress the street child's educational deficiencies, however it requires a more flexible and child-centric programme.

4.8 Educational Reforms in South Africa with Special Reference to Street Children

In the enthusiastic search for a revised education programme in South Africa, the implications of a hidden curriculum should not be ignored. The past system with regimental control, punctuality, regularity, structured authority, rigid time-tabling and prescriptive content paved the way for effective control, respect, obedience, acceptance of authority and also to value merit. According to (Bergh and Berkhout 1994 : 51) who cite Giroux and Penna (1983 : 112), the negative impact of the previous system was that it was responsible for the socialisation of students into accepting the status quo. This made pupils submissive (Apple 1990 : 63), stifled creativity and infused them with feelings of dependency (Gatto 1992 : 30).

With the birth of a new nation, new ideas are being injected into the South African education system. Alongside the emerging education system a new hidden curriculum seems to be emerging and is reflected by a climate of entitlement to qualifications, in which values such as academic excellence, merit and selection are considered as invalid categories (King 1993 : 199-203).

Present reforms to education such as the call for abolishment of examinations and the qualifications related certification function amounts to a deterministic approach where the emergent hidden curriculum is one of structural dependency in which individual inputs and initiatives are underemphasized (Bergh and Berkhout 1994 : 56).

The lessons to be learnt are that the hidden curriculum has many dimensions which could eventually, interactively contradict the ultimate realisation of the expectations of educational reforms in South Africa. According to Berg and Berkhout (1994 : 57), it is only by activating the 'conscience' of the educational system through the role players that education will really contribute constructively to the maximization of human potential and national development. This implies that the business sector, parents and politicians need to make the desired inputs. The business sector as a role player depends on educational institutions for labour resources. Therefore, business needs to adopt a proactive programme where they not only support education in financial terms but also align school education programmes with the needs of the labour force. Parents as role players are the most important and influential people in the child's life. As such they can assist teachers in understanding their children. Cooperation between teachers and parents is essential for positive home-school relations.

In this respect, parents should share in the management responsibilities of the school, offer disciplinary back-up and pursue the interests of all children. The third role player in education is the state department, responsible for education. The structures and functions of the education system in South Africa have their legal base in a range of laws passed in parliament. This has resulted in an education system which is a complex bureaucracy of hierarchies. In many instances, officials and politicians use this bureaucratic structure to evade their inadequacies which often results in disruption of classes. It is desirable to remove political control over education and to replace it with a body, representative of the role players. In the absence of political interference education would be able to function in the interests of the nation instead of serving the interests of a particular political party. The final role player in education are the educators. Educators are charged with the responsibility of teaching and training of children and others. However, in contemporary South Africa educators have become unionised, militant and susceptible to political manipulations. This has caused a decline in the image of educators in society.

It is essential that all role players in education should make a concerted effort to rejuvenate education in South Africa. In this regard, relevant educational programmes must be implemented, there must be cooperation between the relevant role players and the resources necessary for quality education must be maintained at all times for all learners. This implies that the needs of children in special circumstances should also be given priority. In this regard street children should be catered for in the education dispensation. Allowing the community or concerned individuals to take on the responsibility of attending to the educational needs of street children is not only inadequate but also irresponsible because these children require a higher level of educational support in comparison to 'ordinary' children.

4.8.1 Contact with Parents, Organisations and Police

In the case of *children on the streets* they work as beggars, pedlars or prostitutes and generate an income. They maintain contact with their families.

Children of the street usually have little or no contact with their parents and it is on this category that attention will be focused in the research project.

Most of the children interviewed during the course of this study seemed to have left home because conditions were unbearable. What was surprising was that most of them expressed the wish to return home with the intention of improving their domestic circumstances or just to make contact with their family members. This indicates that they had not abandoned their homes completely and harboured desires to reunite with their families.

Research suggests that street children who do maintain some contact with their families are more traumatised than those that do not (Richter 1988 : 58). This is not surprising because where a child is without support and exposed to two opposing social settings he is left confused, wanting and in turmoil.

Although the above is pertinent regarding street children, it is important to note that they do have ideals for their future, plans figuring prominently were plans of being reunited with their families, returning to school and pursuing unrealistic career goals (such as medicine and law). Most street children stated that they looked forward to raising a family some day and indicated that they would be guarded against repeating the mistakes of their parents.

Once on the streets children are exposed to an unpredictable world. They are preyed upon for their sexual services, chased away by police and shopkeepers, regarded as deviant and undesirable by residents in the community (Hickson and Gaydon 1989 : 89).

Within the above dynamics street children are forced to assume responsibilities for themselves. Their major requirements such as food, warmth, safety, companionship and shelter are often hard to come by. They have to develop survival skills to avoid violence, starvation, the risk of arrest, illness and loneliness (Schurink 1994 : 7).

The irony is that in many instances they are *caught in the pendulum of reward versus hazard*. This means that in order to earn money which is a reward they have to prostitute themselves and risk being infected with the HIV-virus which is a hazard and already rampant amongst street children in Durban.

In order to seek oblivion they need to use intoxicants. Therefore, the street child is actually a prisoner of circumstances because he is unable to avoid the dangers lurking around each corner as long as he lives on the streets.

Usually children of the street are approached by street coordinators in pursuit of street outreach programmes. Often this kind of contact is aimed at providing for the immediate needs of the street child in the form of food, warm clothes, medical care and to provide advice about the availability of other services which they can offer.

Frequently, police personnel come into contact with street children in the line of duty. As stated previously, the police may respond to complaints raised by the public against street children or investigate crimes committed by street children.

4.9 Concluding Remarks

Street children leave home because of negative family circumstances such as : parental rejection, inconsistent discipline, poverty (Le Roux 1994 : 69). According to Swart (1988 : 40) children often leave home due to intolerable circumstances created by the father. Peacock (1989 : 47-50) states the reasons for leaving home as due to : strict discipline, ill-treatment by non-biological substitute parents caused by alcohol abuse. These conditions do indeed create a tense atmosphere at home where the parent-child relationship breaks down and children escape to the streets (Le Roux 1994 : 69).

In South Africa, the plight of the street child is a growing concern because it represents an endemic socio-educational problem. The irony is that in attempting to escape an untenable home situation the child enters a life of exploitation, harassment, abuse and violence on the streets.

It appears that street life presents numerous problems such as : educational problems (lack of schooling), emotional problems (lack of trust, fear of loneliness, anxiety and depression), health problems caused by exposure and deprived lifestyle (colds, respiratory problems, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, cholera, gastric fever, malnutrition, bites, burns, lice), social problems (exposure to gangsterism, rejection by people, rape, prostitution).

The above disadvantages are overlooked by street children because of the following advantages that street life offers them :

- (i) They organise themselves into groups which satisfies the need for companionship and security.
- (ii) There is no strict discipline exercised by vindictive parents.
- (iii) Street-life offers an escape from tense anti-child conditions prevalent in their former homes.
- (iv) They are able to generate an income which was previously impossible.
- (v) The life on the street is one of freedom and adventure.

(Schurink et al. 1993 : 80-100).

There is most certainly an imbalance between the advantages and disadvantages of street life. The imbalance weighs more towards the disadvantages. This implies that there is need for intervention and management strategies to curb the street-child problem. Attempts should be directed at amending legislation so that the street child is regarded as a special child in need. This should be reinforced with service delivery by relevant organisations based on mutual co-operation so that the common objective of combating and managing the problem will some day be realised.

It must be recognised that the occurrence of the street child problem is due to many causes. These include factors within the family, the child and the community. If attempts are made to address the problem then the child must be viewed holistically. Accordingly, parents and the community must be made aware of the lasting effects of physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect on children.

These precursors to the street child problem are on the increase in South Africa (Natal Mercury 1998 : 3) and need to be contained as a matter of urgency.

South African society is presently characterised by a high crime rate. Street children, especially African youth may find these circumstances supportive in their quest for freedom on the streets, because they may find it easy to generate an income by virtue of criminal activity. A stable social order needs to be achieved which rejects crime and establishes order in society and deters children from living on the streets.

Factors in the child itself such as a desire for freedom, disturbed emotional development, a dislike towards discipline, dislike towards responsibility and deprivation of love, care and attention leads to its maladjustment as well as a marginalised existence. These needs must be addressed in assistance programmes which may involve placing street children in temporary foster care.

Any attempt at addressing the street child problem is valuable because they must be perceived as efforts which aim to prevent a proliferation of the street child problem, and may some day, develop into a formal assistance programme. Such an attitude is preferable over one that is apathetic. Furthermore, in keeping with a holistic view of the street child, an assistance programme must offer a supportive environment. This will help the street child to overcome emotional problems, the trauma associated with abuse and enable him to accept social norms. Rehabilitation of the street child is a long term and complex process if the child seeks to recover from his dreadful circumstances.

In a search for solutions to the street child problem in South Africa every avenue has to be explored in an attempt at alleviating or preventing a proliferation of the problem, and looking towards education as a contributory factor in the search for solutions is no doubt legitimate because, it is education that will eventually uplift the street child from his position of misery and set him on a course towards development, socialisation and eventual reintegration into society.

CHAPTER FIVE

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 Introduction

In the Oxford dictionary *research* is explained as “ *a search and enquiry after or for or into; endeavour to discover new or collate old facts by scientific study of a subject, course of critical investigation.* ”

According to Cohen and Manion (1994 : 10) research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. It is an important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress and for enabling man to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purpose and to resolve his conflicts.

The term *empirical* means “ to be guided by evidence obtained from systematic research methods rather than by opinions or authorities”

(McMillan and Schumacher 1993 : 11). This implies that an empirical study will involve a search for solutions based on data which is obtained by research methods. These research methods would entail, observation notes, interview records and historical documents which are referred to as data. Empirical methods are evidence bound. This suggests that the *object of enquiry* and the *reality* surrounding it takes *preference over personal experience and belief.*

In attempting to gain insight into the street child phenomenon it is necessary to examine the instrument utilized which is, the empirical research design. The preceding discussion implies that empirical research involves a systematic collection and logical analysis of information about a particular reality for some purpose. Accordingly when the term empirical research is used in this study it is intended to denote an investigation where collection of data involves *notes taken during interviews, written records, questionnaires being completed, articles and reports and anecdotes* being consulted all of which that will eventually help to gain insight into the street child phenomenon so that appropriate solutions may be discovered.

The prospect of undertaking research in education is exciting not only because education is a field of enquiry where the events, subjects and institutions present *ready raw-materials* for enquiries in numerous disciplines, but educational researchers also form part of the scholarly community which upholds and seeks to propagate the values of systematic enquiry and respect for evidence. It is this scientific culture that enables one to distinguish between fact and opinion, evidence and value judgement while simultaneously providing one with the skills of systematic enquiry and the ability to interpret and analyse. This is important because in the pursuit of solutions or truth the empirical researcher must realise that what he seeks to describe, illuminate, portray or explain is but only that fragment of reality which serves as a focus of his particular enquiry (Harbers unpublished). Under the circumstances empirical researchers must bear in mind that their research is different from *everyday-research* in that it needs to be *scientific, systematic, methodical* and the evidence (data) explanatory in nature.

Research involves asking questions, pursuing answers, evaluating circumstances and even generating further questions. It is scientific research that is highly specialised in nature and restricted to scientists. It is this activity that demands *objectivity, precision in terms of technical language, must be verifiable* and *systematic*. In education, scientific research but more especially empirical research seeks to find solutions to problems or improved ways of dealing with problems. In this study the research is orientated towards understanding the street child problem with the intention of addressing it in a *socio-educational* context.

5.2 Planning the Research Design

A qualitative research design was considered appropriate because the aim of the study was to understand the phenomenon, street children. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993 : 372) “ Qualitative Research is, *naturalistic inquiry, involving the use of non interfering data collection strategies to discover the natural flow of events and processes and how participants interpret them .*”

The above explanation is appropriate because one intention of this study was to analyse the activities, perceptions, hopes and aspirations of street children. Initially it appeared as though the achievement of this objective would only be possible by using unobtrusive data collection strategies limited to the interaction of the researcher with his subjects in their environment. These were some of the numerous issues that helped shape a suitable research instrument.

5.2.1 The Case Study Design

In the planning phase the researcher began with the problem itself namely, street children and eventually the intended study was delimited to the topic *Street Children in South Africa working towards socio-educational solutions*.

Although the research strategy was multimethod in nature, using interactive strategies such as ethnographic observation (photos, meetings with subjects) and ethnographic interviews (structured interview using a questionnaire) as well as non interactive strategies (document collection ; observation), the Qualitative Research was based on the Case Study Design because the data collected focused on one phenomenon, "*street children*."

5.2.2 Permission to Conduct Research

Once the topic was finalised the Khayaletu home for street children was identified as the research site. The chairman of the Khayaletu Project, was approached for permission to access the site and its occupants (street children). The chairman was co-operative and not only did he grant permission to access the shelter but also provided the researcher with documents, advice and even made himself available for an interview together with the street coordinator.

5.2.3 Khayaletu

Khayaletu is an autonomous, politically non-aligned, non-governmental, welfare organisation which was established to meet the needs of street children in Port Shepstone. The project originated in November 1993 when Gulshera Khan the local supervisor for National Child Welfare and Social Workers placed an advert in the " South Coast Herald " (a local newspaper), requesting individuals to attend a meeting on 19 November 1993, where they could pledge support towards assisting street children.

At this meeting a committee was elected and has continued to function until this day. The name adopted by the Street Child Committee was " The Port Shepstone Street Children Committee-Khayaletu Street Children Project ."

5.2.4 Selection of Respondents

Since the Khayaletu Shelter houses street children who are at liberty to 'come and go' as they please the researcher chose a particular day to interview as many as possible.

On 20 July 1997 (Sunday) the researcher met with ten street children who were interviewed. During the course of the week the researcher encountered two deserters (former Khayaletu inmates) who were also interviewed. Interviews with the 'street-girls' were by chance because they were observed at the Port Shepstone beach promenade where they were interviewed by the researcher. Initially these girls were hesitant to be interviewed but consented upon being assured that researcher was not a policeman.

5.2.5 Care Workers

The street child coordinator acts as educator and 'care worker'. He also assists the street children with cleaning activities, preparation of meals, securing health care and even counsels the street children.

Two social workers in the employ of the Port Shepstone Child Welfare both provide professional assistance and support to the street coordinator via the Street Child Committee.

5.3 Research Instrument

In qualitative research the researcher is the "main instrument for data gathering" (Mellet 1993 : 108). The researcher found this statement to be a 'universal truth' because he was always on the look-out for street children. As a result he became familiar with their favourite haunts, places of employment and income generation techniques. During the research process the researcher spent time observing events (AGM Street Child Committee) as well as street children in their natural settings (participant observation). In addition to participant observation the researcher found it necessary to conduct Ethnographic Interviews. This entailed the use of a questionnaire which the researcher completed during the interview. The interviews were therefore, structured because the questions were pre-determined.

Elite Interviews were also conducted with 'well informed' participants such as the chairman of street child committee, a social worker who is also committee member and the street coordinator. These interviews were unstructured and informal.

5.3.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is one of many ways in which information may be gathered. Reasons for its application were :

- (i) Questions were standardized ensuring that a certain degree of consistency was maintained.
- (ii) Given time constraints this method was most appropriate.
- (iii) Objectives of the research problem were pursued during the formulation of questions for incorporation into the questionnaire.
- (iv) The questionnaire as a written record could be analysed at leisure.

5.3.2 Construction of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was biographical in orientation because the objective of the empirical study was to acquire an insight into the etiological factors in the homes as well as other relevant experiences of the participants (street children). Questions therefore, were designed to explore a wide spectrum of 'areas' ranging from family background, educational attainments, experiences on the streets, life in the shelter and future aspirations. Keeping in mind the fact that the questionnaire was to be used in a formal and structured situation namely the *structured interview* an attempt was made to maintain a conversational tone in the questionnaire and allow the participants an opportunity to express themselves. This is the reason why questions were generally *dichotomous* and *semi-structured*. Presenting relatively open-ended questions allowed for flexibility in that it accommodated individual responses while remaining within the parameters of intent.

5.3.3 Characteristics of a Good Questionnaire

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993 : 242) the general layout and organisation of the questionnaire is of paramount importance. Furthermore, the following guidelines should be observed when designing a questionnaire :

- (i) Carefully check grammar, spelling, punctuation and other details.
- (ii) Make sure that printing is clear and questions are easy to understand.

- (iii) Make instructions brief and easy to understand.
- (iv) Avoid cluttering the questions.
- (v) Avoid abbreviated items.
- (vi) Keep questions as short as possible.
- (vii) Provide adequate space for the responses to open-ended questions.
- (viii) Use a logical sequence and group related items together.
- (ix) Number pages and items.
- (x) Place important items at the beginning of long questionnaires.

The above was found to be useful guidelines, which had to be applied specifically to the questionnaire administered in chapter six because respondents had to complete those questionnaires personally. In addition to the above guidelines it was discovered that questions on age and race seemed to deter some potential respondents especially females. Furthermore, simplicity in design both in format and question construction seemed preferable to respondents. The use of 'sophisticated and technical' terminology only serves to intimidate respondents. This is a natural reaction because respondents do have a desire to appear knowledgeable.

5.3.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Questionnaire

The structured interview where a questionnaire is used, is an intrusive activity, because the participants are aware that they are under examination. This could cause participants to become defensive, dishonest and even evasive. In some instances participants could display *role selection* - where they take on conduct expected by a person in a particular research perspective that is being explored. Finally participants could also respond in a certain manner because it is deemed to be socially desirable. For example one participant vehemently denied that he had offered sexual services for remuneration unaware that the street coordinator had already advised the researcher of this fact prior to the interview.

Against the above background the questionnaire cannot be dismissed as an unreliable instrument. The fact is that, the questionnaire is still an appropriate technique for obtaining information from subjects because it displays the following advantages :

- (i) It is a relatively economical instrument.
- (ii) Questions are standardized and can also be pre-emptive.
- (iii) Questions could be designed in accordance to specific objectives.

- (iv) The questionnaire is a versatile instrument.
- (v) Information is recorded and therefore, becomes available for further use.

Considering the fact that this study is concerned with the observation and recording of empirical reality, the use of the questionnaire was found to be most appropriate.

5.3.5 Validity and Reliability

5.3.5.1 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world (McMillan and Schumacher 1993 : 391). In qualitative research validity raises the following issues :

- (i) Do researchers actually observe what they think they observe.
- (ii) Do researchers understand meanings in the same way as the participant understands them.

From the above it appears that in the case of qualitative research, validity is reliant on data collection and analysis techniques. Internal validity may be increased by factors such as :

- (i) Lengthy data collection period which allows for continuous data analysis and corroboration.
- (ii) Participants language being understood so that concepts used will have mutual meaning to both the participant and researcher.
- (iii) Field research involving participant observation is carried out in natural settings which reflect reality of life experience more accurately than 'laboratory situations'.
- (iv) Disciplined subjectivity which according to Erikson (1973) as cited by McMillan and Schumacher (1993 : 391) refers to a researcher's self-monitoring so as to avoid their personal biases from interfering with data collection and analysis.

5.3.5.2 Reliability

In the context of qualitative research "reliability refers to the extent to which different researchers will discover the same phenomenon and to which researchers and participants agree about the description of the phenomenon" (Lemmer 1993 : 96).

Reliability in qualitative research refers to the consistency of the researcher's interactive style, data recording, data analysis and interpretation of the participant's responses.

Researchers usually enhance reliability by choosing an appropriate research design and data collection technique. In the case of reliability in design attention is devoted to aspects such as researcher role, informant selection, social context, data collection and analysis strategies and finally, analytical premises.

In an attempt to ensure reliability in data collection researchers usually use a combination of eight strategies to reduce threats to reliability. These are verbatim accounts, low inference descriptions, multiple researchers, mechanically recorded data, participant researchers, member checking, participant review and negative cases. In this study extensive use was made of verbatim accounts and participant review.

5.3.5.3 Ensuring Validity and Reliability

In an attempt at enhancing validity the following measures were taken :

- (i) In the structured interview a questionnaire was used ensuring that all questions were standardized.
- (ii) The street coordinator was present throughout the entire interview. He played the role of interpreter.
- (iii) Participant's were allowed to explain their responses so as to avoid misconceptions.
- (iv) Participants were interviewed in their natural setting - on site in the Khayaletu shelter. This was to ensure that participants were comfortable.
- (v) Photographs were taken of street children going about their routine.
- (vi) Documents in respect of Khayaletu were collected over a period of time. This resulted in an accumulation of artifacts such as minutes of meetings, applications made in respect of funding, appeals for assistance.
- (vii) Anecdotes were kept. These comprised of impromptu field notes.

In an attempt at ensuring reliability the following steps were observed :

- (i) The participants were unknown to the researcher
- (ii) During participant selection the chairperson of Khayaletu and the street coordinator were approached for recommendations to ensure that a homogeneous group was selected
- (iii) During the entire study care was taken to name each participant, whether it was the chairman or the street child. This was done so that each individual could be identified and his interaction explained if the need arises
- (iv) Data collection techniques are specified
- (v) Data analysis strategies are explained

5.4 Pilot Study

Usually a pilot study is carried out to identify deficiencies in the research instrument with the intention of correcting same. This was deemed unnecessary because the structured interview was opted for in information collection and any deficiency encountered in the research instrument would be corrected as and when it arose.

5.5 Administration of the Questionnaire

Interviews conducted with participants (street children) were on an individual basis. The street coordinator acted as interpreter. Each participant was made to feel comfortable and assured that questions posed were strictly for research purposes. Participants were also advised that they had the option of being interviewed in the presence of the street coordinator, a colleague or on their own so as to avoid communication problems. It was surprising to find that participants generally chose the street coordinator over a colleague.

Interviews were conducted in the shelter at a table where the researcher posed the questions as per questionnaire to the participants (street children). The researcher's command of the language used by the participants surprised them, and put them at ease because after the first few interviews the street coordinator found it unnecessary to act as interpreter. At the termination of each interview the participant was asked whether he had any question, message or concern on which he wished to elaborate.

This questionnaire was administered to a total of fourteen street children while informal interviews were conducted with a social worker, policeman, the street coordinator and also the chairman of the street child committee in Port Shepstone. The reasons for the interviews with the informants were to :

- (i) determine the attitude of key personnel towards street children
- (ii) ascertain the level of intervention by various personnel
- (iii) identify the magnitude of the street child problem in Port Shepstone

5.6 Survey of the Perceptions of the Community Regarding Street Children

Preliminary to the interviews with the street children, the researcher deemed it necessary to determine the attitude of the community towards the street child phenomenon.

5.6.1 Reasons for the Survey

When children find themselves on the streets it is the public that responds to them. Generally the public has responded sympathetically. However, it is not unusual for members of the public to respond negatively. A case in point is described by Schurink (1994 : 12), where a smartly dressed woman from Dube in Soweto, “condemned the Dube Street-Wise house at an international conference on disadvantaged children. This sort of response is very depressing for those who work with street children. We should, however, stop being so understanding of personal prejudice of this nature and start insisting that people stop shrugging off their community responsibilities, especially so when these concern local children, declared Mrs. Albertina Sisulu, who was called in by a Soweto Street-Wise coordinator, Mrs. Minah Motaung, to defuse community hostility towards the presence of the children.”

Where public response is one of sympathy then it is usually easy to engage their assistance in developing appropriate intervention programmes for street children in an area. On the other hand when the public regards the presence of street children as repulsive, they usually demand 'police intervention' and 'clean-up' programmes which are geared towards removing the street child from their locality. This response is borne out of ignorance because removing the street children is not an attempt at addressing the problem. A typical response from the public is one experienced by the "Streetwalkers in Ladysmith". The streetwalkers in Ladysmith are young female runaways, usually in their teens that prostitute themselves in Lyell Street. When the Sunday Times investigated it emerged that approximately twenty five females were involved including girls as young as fifteen years. As far as residents were concerned these prostitutes should be arrested (Sunday Times 1996 : 1).

In South Africa there is an added problem of economic depression, accompanied by high crime levels. These conditions may give rise to numerous consequences such as :

- (i) street children become highly visible
- (ii) the population of street children increases when families become impoverished
- (iii) crime may become an option to street children in an attempt at generating an income for their survival.

These circumstances often evoke feelings such as prejudice, fear and hostility towards street children.

It is not uncommon to find community hostility towards street children. However, it is the reasons for their hostility that is perturbing. Le Roux (1994 : 65) reported incidents like the following : "the alarmed local community called in the police who dispersed the gathering of black children on public premises" and "Permanent premises were exceptionally difficult to obtain, as people were hostile to the idea of street 'delinquents' being housed in their immediate vicinity." One finds that the community response is one of fear and their main concern is to distance themselves from the street child problem.

Such a situation is undesirable because according to Schurink et al. (1993 : 93) public perceptions play an important role in shaping policy towards street children. Therefore, a balanced perception needs to be inculcated where people consider street children as a 'community problem' and not as 'nobody's problem' (Schurink et al. 1993 : 92).

It is important to ensure that the South African public has a sympathetic attitude because according to Tacon (1991) as well as Espert and Myers (1988) as cited by Schurink et al (1993 : 92), research indicates that intervention programmes designed to assist street children usually succeed when they are "community-owned" and "community-based." In this country community perceptions towards street children seems to be one of '*mixed feelings*' ranging from compassion to resentment, dislike, anger, contempt and fear (Swart in Schurink et al.1993 : 93). This attitude could have changed in 1997 where democracy has ushered in social changes that are intended to work towards the improvement of the previously disadvantaged population group in South Africa.

Considering the above it was necessary to investigate public attitudes towards street children.

5.6.2 Aims of the Survey

The goal of the random survey was to ascertain public perception and knowledge of the street child problem in Port Shepstone. Consequent objectives which emerged were:

- (i) To ascertain the public's knowledge of the street child problem in Port Shepstone.
- (ii) To determine the public's attitude towards street children in Port Shepstone.
- (iii) To ascertain the public's opinion on who is most capable of addressing the problem.
- (iv) To determine the public's opinion on appropriate intervention programmes for street children.

5.6.3 Sample

Since the survey was intended to gauge the perceptions of the public in general, the target group was a cross-section of the Port Shepstone community. Accordingly the sample size and character was of a random nature.

5.6.4 Methodology

This exercise was an extensive social survey. A questionnaire was distributed among business houses, schools and households in Port Shepstone. Furthermore, questionnaires were also handed to individuals on the street and collected immediately from these respondents. Approximately two hundred questionnaires were distributed. Whereas the distribution was easy, returns by respondents in numerous instances, were reluctant. The reason furnished in all instances was the excuse of being "too busy." However, on the brighter side the researcher found the professional sector such as educators and the chief magistrate to be cooperative. They had the questionnaires ready well before the collection date. Individuals in the business sector were least co-operative. Most of the recipients of questionnaires in this sector of the community were unable to complete the questionnaire despite an extension of one calendar month and offers to assist them.

However, of the two hundred questionnaires distributed one hundred and eight were retrieved. This translates to a return rate of 54%, which was satisfactory.

5.7 Processing and Application of Data

The responses of participants were recorded as accurately as possible. The researcher reviewed recordings with participants where necessary, in order to establish whether his interpretations were correct. This exercise enabled the researcher to ensure that there was a high degree of correlation between what the participant wished to project and what was recorded. This was pleasing because it was indicative that *internal validity* was not being compromised. The data collected in the two empirical studies are presented and analysed in chapter six.

5.8 Limitations of the Investigation

The term *limitations* could have various connotations. One such connotation could imply 'shortcomings'. However, the word limitations could also be used in a positive context, that is to specify area or scope. The term limitations in this study is used in both contexts.

The limitation of the scope of the study was regarded as a necessity in respect of the problem statement. Delimiting the scope of the study helped to focus on a particular aspect, which was then explored. This limitation was considered to be an advantage because this exercise placed the study in context of the greater reality and focused the direction of the exploration.

Methodological limitations, particularly sampling and site selection are difficult to manipulate. Once again this is an advantage because it enhances reliability.

In the case of language barriers and possible dishonesty by participants *design limitations* were implemented. This was the prime reason for designing a questionnaire and using it in an interview.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that empirical research is an attempt at 'obtaining knowledge by virtue of the senses'. Rationalism is an attempt at 'obtaining knowledge through contemplation' while the natural sciences such as biology and physics involves the acquisition of knowledge by investigating natural phenomena. It would be lacking in vision and therefore, a limitation to treat scientific research as a discrete entity because most scientific research, whether its object is nature (physical laws and life) or society, is undeniably logical and involves abstract reasoning together with the

observation and recording of empirical reality (which are aspects of rationalism and empiricism). This perception unfolded because at times it was necessary to employ mathematical calculations to analyse data which was recorded. Once the mathematical procedures were complete the solutions were not 'self-illuminating' but had to be distinguished after comparisons and 'value-judgements' were executed. This serves to reinforce the principle that researchers cannot embrace 'absolute truth' in the social sciences but must aspire to describe, illuminate and explain that aspect of reality which was the focus of the study, in various ways. In such a pursuit the researcher cannot divorce himself from his or her own values, some of which he or she may not even be aware of and others that the researcher may not be able to admit. It is these issues and variables that are the real limitations in empirical research. Fortunately, skills such as systematic enquiry and logical interpretation help researchers to overcome their limitations or rather their shortcomings.

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results of both the empirical studies will be discussed. An analysis of the community survey will be presented first which will then be followed by a presentation of the results obtained during the interviews with participants and informants. A background discussion of the Khayaletu Project will also be presented in order to place the data analysis in context.

6.2 Presentation and Analysis of Data on the Survey of Community Perceptions

Descriptive and inferential techniques have been utilized in the analysis which is presented on the next page.

Table 6.1

6.2.1 Socio-demographic features of the Survey Sample		
• Population Spread		
(a) white	46	42,5%
(b) black	23	21,3%
(c) Indian	38	35,2%
(d) coloured	01	01%
• Age Group		
(a) 0-18	72	66,7%
(b) 19-24	11	10,2%
(c) 25-34	09	08,3%
(d) 35-44	12	11,1%
(e) 45-54	04	03,7%
(f) 55 +	0	
• Educational Level		
(a) 0 to std 9	75	69,4%
(c) std 10	16	14,9%
(d) matric + degree	17	15,7%
• Occupation		
(a) students	71	65,7%
(b) professional	17	15,7%
(c) clerical / secretarial	04	03,7%
(d) entrepreneurs	05	04,6%
(e) salesmen / ladies	02	02%
(f) management	05	04,6%
(e) services (police)	04	03,7%

From the above it is clear that the majority of the respondents were white (42,5%) while coloureds (1%) were least represented. The Indian group was the second highest at 35, 2% and blacks were third at 21, 3%. This pattern does represent the population composition of the area.

Ages of the respondents ranged from teenagers (17 years) to people in their middle ages. The age group most represented was 0-18 at 66,7%.

A wide range of occupational groups were represented ranging from the unemployed to even a chief magistrate.

Educational levels of the respondents ranged from none to individuals who are university graduates holding more than one degree.

6.2.2 Respondents' Knowledge of the Problem

It was not necessary for respondents to be 'information-rich' because this investigation was extensive in nature, with the focus on measuring community perceptions in general.

6.2.3 Defining the Street Child

Of the sample 82 (75,9%) respondents had a good concept of a street child. Their definitions included the elements 'child', 'homelessness', 'lack of care and support'.

14,8% or 16 respondents considered a street child to be a homeless 'person'. These respondents did not include the concept 'child' in their definition.

5,6% or 6 respondents did not attempt to define a street child.

1,9% or 2 respondents considered a street child to be one whose parents are divorced.

0,9% or 1 respondent considered a street child to be an abused child.

0,9% or 1 respondent categorised a street child along racial lines that is 'a black' child.

The above data indicates that the public has a good perception of who the street child really is.

6.2.4 Awareness of the Problem

Respondents were requested to indicate their awareness of the problem. The following data was collated.

Only 10 (9,3%) respondents were not aware of the existence of street children. 98 (90,7%) indicated that they were aware of the existence of street children in the area. In an analysis of the sample that were aware the following pattern unfolded. A small number 3 (3,1%) indicated that they had not encountered street children but believed that street children do exist in their area. A small number of respondents, 3 (3,1%) also indicated that they had become aware of the street child problem through the media. A marginally increased proportion of respondents, 4 (4,1%) indicated that they had seen, heard or read about the street children. A large number of respondents, 88 (89,7%) were aware of the existence of street children by virtue of sight and contact with them.

Respondents were also asked to estimate the number of street children present. A small number of respondents, 13 (12%) estimated the population of street children to number between 40 to 50. This is close to the official estimate (Rev. J. Green chairman of the street child committee also believes that there are approximately 50 street children in Port Shepstone at any given time). A large number of respondents, 58 (53,7%) were unable to estimate the number of street children in Port Shepstone. A significant percentage of respondents, 16 (14,8%) had an unrealistic concept of the size of the problem.

6.2.5 Attitudes towards Street Children

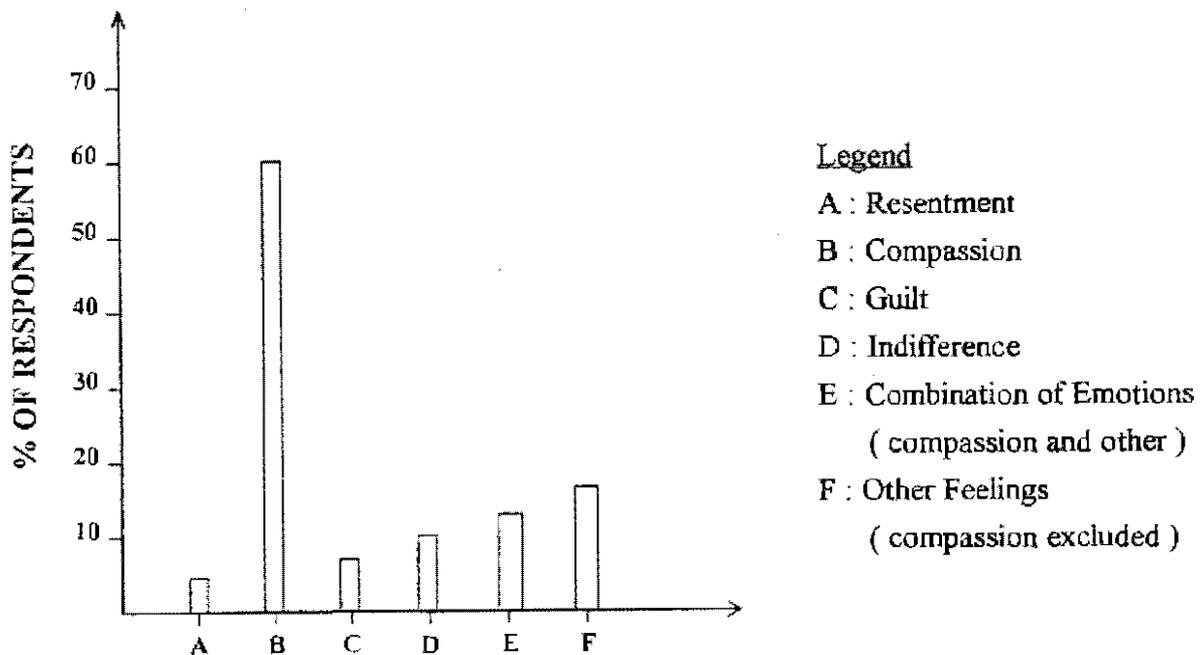
In this item of the questionnaire the overwhelming attitude towards street children was one of compassion as indicated by 64 (59,2%) of respondents. This number would increase to 74 (68,5%) if the 10 respondents in the combination who also indicated compassion as one of their choices is added.

The proportion of respondents who indicated resentment 3 (2,8%), guilt 8 (7,4%), indifference 10 (10,2%) were relatively small to those who were compassionate.

The respondents that indicated that they had other feelings were relatively significant in comparison to those who were resentful or guilty. 12 (11,1%) respondents were in this category and substantiated their choice. Their feelings ranged from shame and sensitivity to anger towards the parents of street children.

A graphical representation of the above is depicted below.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS STREET CHILDREN



6.2.6 Is the Street Child Phenomenon considered to be a Problem ?

A majority of the respondents 99 (91,6%) were of the opinion that street children are a problem. A small number of respondents 5 (4,7%) did not consider street children to be a problem. Finally 4 (3,7%) of the sample did not comment.

In response to item 8.2 the following pattern emerged :

27 (25%) of respondents regarded street children to be a problem to Port Shepstone only.

27 (25%) of respondents regarded street children to be a problem both to the image of Port Shepstone as well as the public.

54 (50%) of respondents considered street children to present a problem to the image of the town, the public and the respondents as well.

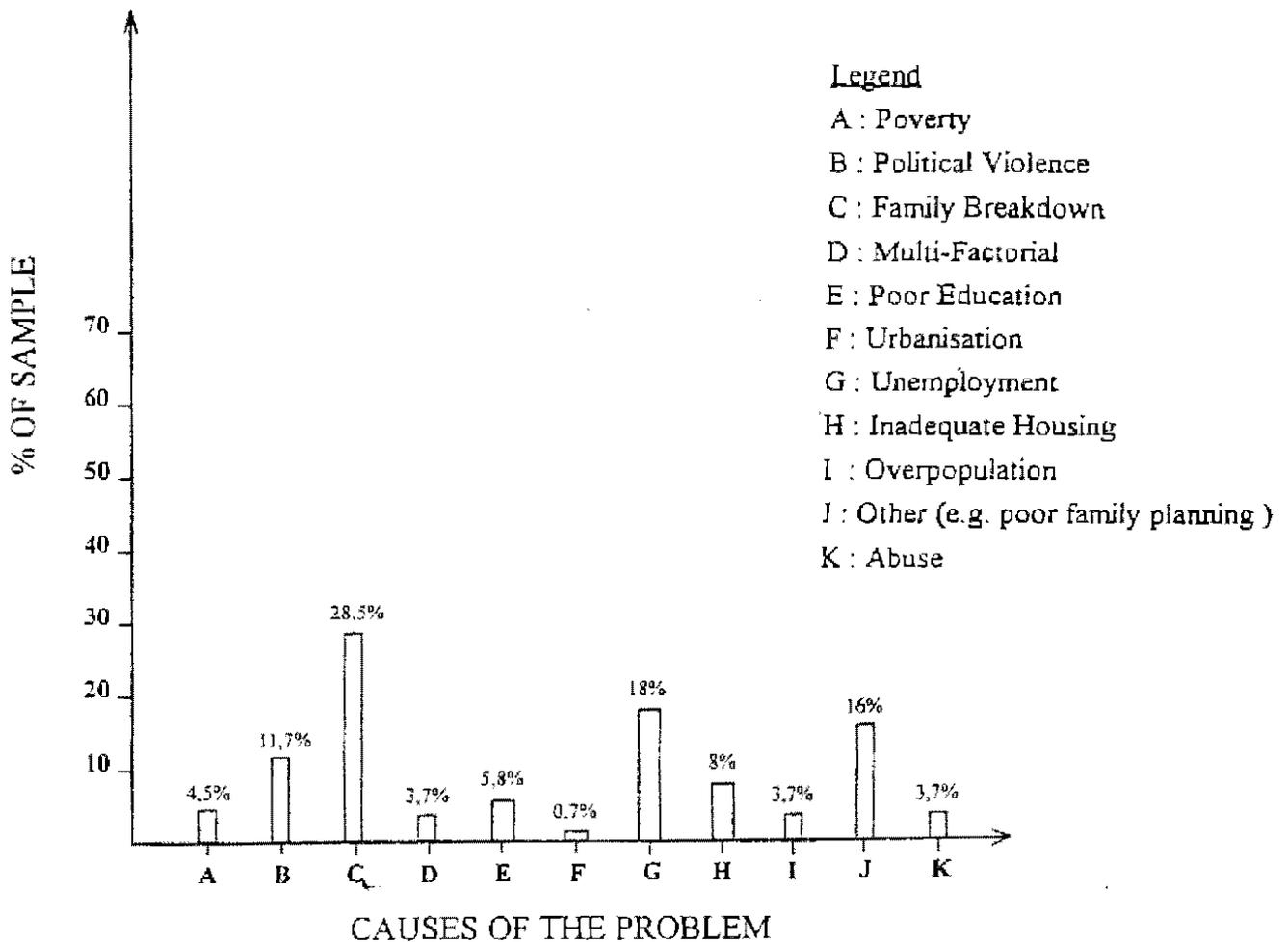
The respondents were of the opinion that street children were potential or practising criminals. A small proportion of the sample perceived street children as a social problem.

6.2.7 Causes of the Problem

In this item it was necessary to *pool* responses because some respondents provided more than one reason for what they believed to be the cause of the street child problem. Upon pooling the responses of the 108 respondents there was an aggregate of 137. This number was utilized in the analysis and is indicative of the frequency that a particular reason is given by the respondents as a cause of the street child problem.

The following trend appeared in the subsequent analysis.

Figure 6.2



It is clear from the above that the most common reason provided by the respondents is family breakdown 39 (28,5%). Unemployment featured as a popular reason at a frequency of 18 (13,1%).

6.2.8 Solutions to the Problem

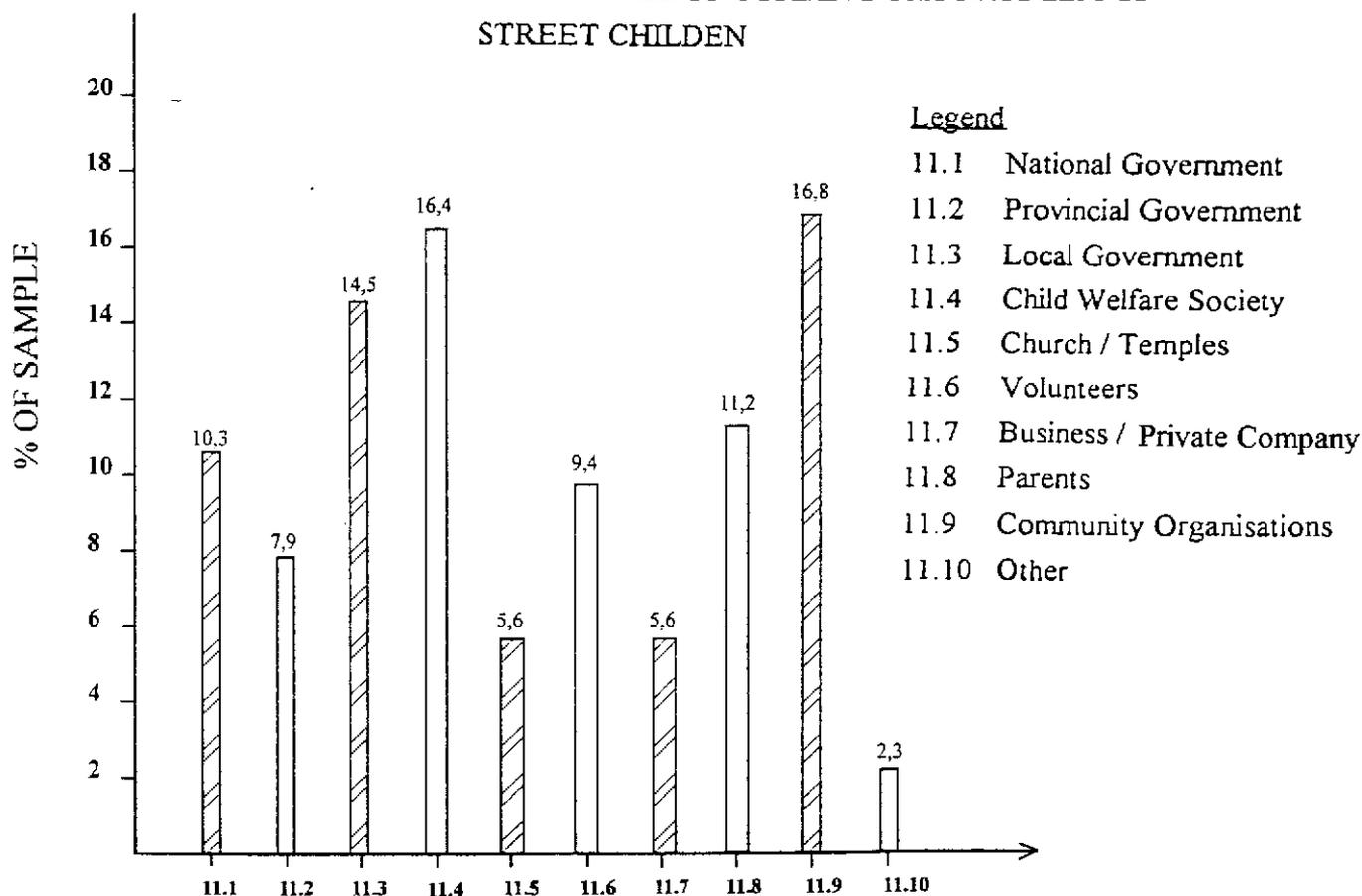
In item 10 respondents provided recommendations which included the following :

- (i) family planning
- (ii) support centres with education and training
- (iii) shelters
- (iv) outreach programmes
- (v) employment

In the case of item 11 once again it was necessary to pool the responses given by the respondents in order to establish meaningful information and accurate interpretation. The aggregate attained was 214 and once again the frequency of choices in this item is indicated in the analysis i.e. (11.1 to 11.10). The most popular choice was 11.9 (community organisations) at a frequency of 36 (16,8%). Just as popular was item 11.4 (the child welfare) at a frequency of 35 (16,4%). The local authority as a role player in curbing the street child problem was a close third at a frequency of 31 (14,5%).

Figure 6.3

WHO DO YOU THINK IS MOST CAPABLE OF CURBING THE PROBLEM OF STREET CHILDEN



6.2.9 The Public's Awareness of the Khayaletu Project

It was interesting to find out the proportion of the public who were aware of the Khayaletu Project. Only 58 (53,7%) of respondents indicated that an organisation existed. Of the 58 respondents only 3 were aware of Khayaletu. A large number of respondents 39 (36,1%) were under the impression that no such organisation existed while 11 (10,2%) indicated that they did not know whether an organisation existed.

6.2.10 The Problem in the Future

The respondents were asked to indicate what their opinion was in respect of the street child problem in the future. The majority 99 (91,6%) indicated that the problem would escalate due to factors such as :

- (i) greater unemployment
- (ii) greater population
- (iii) more social problems
- (iv) increasing poverty
- (v) increasing sexual activity
- (vi) aids would create more orphans
- (vii) the problem is not being addressed correctly at present

A small number 4 (3,7%) were of the opinion that the problem would decrease and the reasons that they furnished were as follows :

- (i) more people are able to access education
- (ii) affirmative action will improve the social circumstances of blacks
- (iii) more intervention programmes will be put into place

Finally 5 (4,7%) respondents were unsure of what the future would hold for street children.

6.2.11 Conclusion

The investigation revealed that the majority of the respondents are aware of the existence of street children in Port Shepstone. They also have a good concept of who a street child is and know of the pathetic circumstances facing these children.

Although many respondents felt compassion towards street children they are apathetic because many were unaware of the Street Child Committee and Khayaletu. According to respondents the problem is certain to escalate in the future due to numerous socio-economic factors. Intervention should take on a multi-disciplinary approach with coordinated efforts from community organisations, welfare workers and local authorities being at the fore-front.

When the street child problem is placed in a macro-dynamic perspective, then it would appear that solutions are not overnight miracles, but must begin at grassroots level, with an entire new spirit, philosophy and intentions which would eventually evolve into a more child-centric environment. In pursuit of these ideals, perhaps it is time that children had some say over their rights, needs and search for self-determination.

Accordingly, there is a need for children to be consulted on issues that affect them if there is a sincere desire to arrive at a balanced legal and social order in the country. There is need for politicians and others to break away from finger pointing and shifting blame to the apartheid era. This only amounts to evading reality and responsibility towards the children in South Africa. There must be a constructive movement towards creative developments, which will achieve what is necessary for the adequate development of children. A step in the right direction was the International Summit on the Rights of Children in South Africa which was held in 1992, where over two hundred children from all over the country, between the ages of twelve and sixteen participated in formulating the Children's Charter of South Africa. In this charter the 'voices of the children and their desperate plea to be heard, respected and consulted on issues affecting them and their future have been collated and presented'

(Squelch 1995 : 29). This summit has been a turning point in realising a culture of children's rights in South Africa, which should eventually pave the way for a balanced national policy epitomized by a liberal, protective and consultative environment for children. This can only be achieved by a caring, committed and empowered community who have a sense of awareness accompanied by the desire for positive change.

6.3 Presentation of Data Collected During the Interviews with the Street Coordinator, Social Worker and the Inspector of Police

In the following paragraphs, the results of the empirically testable, research project amongst the street children is presented. Interviews with key participants opens the discussion, thereby, providing windows through which the world of the street child may be observed. This is followed by plates showing scenes captured during the study. Thereafter, relevant articles and extracts from Khayaletu records are presented. Finally, the information collected during the research is analysed statistically and inferentially.

6.3.1 On 6 June 1996 an interview with the street coordinator and chairman of the Khayaletu street child committee was conducted, the transcript of this interview is as follows.

1. What prompted you to get involved in the Khayaletu Street Child Project ?

Street coordinator : There are numerous children who experience lots of problems and they needed assistance. I was a street child myself and understand their predicament.

Chairman : The street children represent a social problem. Therefore, I responded to a need in the community. I see the street child as being on a 'dead end' track and my intention was to reintegrate them into mainstream society where they will have a future.

2. What kind of assistance did you receive from institutions , individuals and the community?

Chairman: Institutions such as Port Shepstone Child Welfare and Ziphakamisa provides considerable support. Concerned people of various faiths are also supportive. Individuals in organisations are also supportive (example the social worker of the Port Shepstone Child and Family Welfare). Overall I think that the community has a positive attitude because they allow the street children casual employment such as garden services, window cleaning and car washes in return for remuneration. However, individuals are divided because some are supportive while others are not.

3. In which year did you start ?

Street coordinator: November 1993

Chairman: 19 November 1993

4. *Approximately how many street children do you assist each year ?*

Street coordinator : about forty to forty five each month.

Chairman : approximately forty five per month.

5. *What are the educational needs of the street children and how does your programme meet these needs ?*

Chairman : Basic skills such as to read and write were offered to the street children. This was academically orientated but unruly behaviour caused this programme to terminate. What they really need are skills to earn money and a bridging course which would enable them to return to school. However, these aims are futile due to a lack of premises and educators.

6. *What is the ultimate aim of the project ?*

Chairman : To pave the way for a better life for the street children. They do not have a future on the streets. By assisting them to move back into homes they may eventually improve the quality of their lives.

7. *Are there any educational programmes offered at present ?*

Chairman: No. The reasons are: Firstly there must be a place to educate. This is one of the greatest needs of Khayaletu. The St. Katharine's hall was used as a centre for learning, however, the 'naughty' behaviour of the street children saw the withdrawal of this privilege.

Street coordinator: The need for food , shelter and clothing are immediate needs. Although education is an important need, age may be a severe handicap because a sixteen year old attending grade one or two may be the focus of ridicule.

8. *What in your opinion are the educational expectations of the street children ?*

Street coordinator: Children have a desire for education and feel that they need education. However, a lack of equipment, venue and suitable educators makes it impossible to render a suitable education programme. I was in a similar situation and saw education as important. I yearned for education which I was denied and envied those that were able to attend school.

There were numerous adversities which I experienced and when I did return to school I was very much older than the other pupils. This made me feel uncomfortable. Although my aim was to receive an education I found this difficult because I was the focus of innuendo.

I think that many street children share the same adversities and the longer they remain on the streets the harder it becomes for them to give up their way of life.

Chairman : I am not really sure. I think that there must be some desire in them to receive an education. I say this because there were some who did study and even completed their schooling .

In a sense one must be educated in order to realise the need for it. There were four children who did return to school this year.

What needs to be done is to develop an awareness in street children to realise that their lives on the street is a dead end existence and perhaps this may evoke a sense of realisation in them to value education

9. Have any of these children attended school ?

Chairman: Yes

9.1 What is the highest standard by the street child with the highest education ?

Chairman: Grade four

10. What kind of education would you envisage for street children ?

Chairman : Our committee should revise its outlook at educational needs of the street child. I would expect the education to be separate from formal school. Education needs to be informal yet effective. The first objective would be to create an awareness of the importance of education. It would be inappropriate to send a street child into a normal school or society without a 'bridging phase'. The aim of the project was to provide a link between 'life on the street and society'.

11. Did you conduct any educational programmes for street children ?

Chairman : Yes the committee took the children on an ecological camp. This was a valuable exercise because the street children were exposed to the following:

- (1) They saw that people were concerned about them.
- (2) Trust levels were built.
- (3) Street children were able to show creativity and capabilities.

12. What are the attitudes of the following towards street children ?

12.1 Individuals and organisations.

Chairman: Work with street children is not a popular welfare subject. People are divided on this issue. Some believe that these children are just naughty and maybe they are.

13. What level of involvement would you like to see in general ?

Chairman: I believe that we require a full time director for the Khayaletu Project so that the organisation would assume a greater degree of structure. Furthermore, the incumbent would be able to devote full attention and secure resources such as educational and support services.

13.1 Organisations

Various organisations have lent valuable support. They have been responsible for aspects such as the feeding scheme and cleaning services.

13.2 Local Government

I have not found the transitional local council (TLC) to be supportive. They have never been involved in any way in the project. I feel that we need a lot more help from them since they do have a responsibility towards these children. They have the necessary infrastructure such as a health department, land and finance to assist.

The local authority should be a concerned stakeholder and instead of using the Protection Services to beat up children in the hope of getting rid of them they should assist towards finding solutions to the street child problem. I firmly believe that the TLC should recognise the fact that the street children are here to stay. I am of the opinion that some of the councillors just don't want to learn about the problems of street children. By turning a blind eye the problem is not going to disappear. No social problem has been solved this way. It is clear that the T.L.C. does not have a realistic approach. Perhaps this is due to their limitations such as budgetary shortfalls and ignorance. During my recent trip to Sweden I was told that there was no such concept as a street child in that country, and if there was a street child then the local authority would pursue such a phenomenon aggressively. Sadly, this is not the case in South Africa.

13.3 Businesses

Some businesses are supportive due to the efforts of individuals who represent them. Many local businesses are only too happy to provide opportunities so that the street children could earn some money.

14. What is the ratio of males to females in respect of street children ?

Chairman: There are very few females. Perhaps the females are much older and work as prostitutes.

When I speak of street children it would imply a group aged between nine to sixteen years.

Perhaps the older ones gravitate towards other activities.

15. What number do you estimate the extent of street children to reach in Port Shepstone on the average ?

Chairman / Street coordinator : Thirty to forty.

16. Why is the Government taking a backseat in curbing the street child problem in this country ?

Chairman: It is a good question because this is a national problem and it *does involve children*. Therefore, the government needs to take stock of its stance. Perhaps, this is due to a hangover from the apartheid era. I am optimistic that the present government will devote the necessary attention to the street child problem. If government got involved then our task would become easier.

17. If you were requested to establish an educational programme for street children ? :

17.1 Would you co-operate ?

Chairman: Yes.

17.2 Explain why ?

Street children is a growing phenomenon. If they are growing up without skills and views in keeping with those of society we have a widening rift resulting in negative public reaction because crime will escalate. Therefore, education is an important need which will help to fight the street child phenomenon. It will help to achieve some of our objectives such as reintegration into society

-Termination of interview-

6.3.2 On 18 March 1997 a structured interview was conducted with a social worker in the employ of the Port Shepstone Child and Family Welfare who is also a member of the street child committee. A transcript of this interview is as follows :

1. Have you come across street children in Port Shepstone ?

Yes.

2. How many street children have you come across this year alone?

Approximately forty.

3. In your estimate, what is the approximate number of street children in Port Shepstone ?

Approximately fifty at any given time.

4. Could you identify any assistance programmes which are available for street children in Port Shepstone ?

- (i) The Khayaletu Shelter
- (ii) St. Katharine's Church
- (iii) Child Welfare
- (iv) Ziphakamise
- (v) Practical Ministries
- (vi) St. Martin's in Oribi

5.1 Which sectors of the South African population is represented in the street child population ?

Mostly black boys. Then there is the group whom I term the 'runaways'. We must distinguish between the street child and the runaway. In the case of runaways, the cause is usually rebellion against authority and the child returns to his/her permanent home. In the case of street children the child is always on the street and comprises of males whereas runaways could be boys or girls.

5.2 Comment on the racial composition of the street child population in Port Shepstone ?

I would say that they are predominantly black street children and no runaways in this town.

6. *Are there street children of other race groups besides the African population groups ?*

I have not come across the phenomenon in other racial groups. As I have said other racial groups are well represented in runaways but not as street children.

7. *What is your concept of a street child ?*

A street child is a boy between seven and sixteen years of age who has chosen the streets as his home.

8. *Could you identify some etiological factors of the street child phenomenon in the Port Shepstone magisterial district ?*

1. Family Problems, death and divorce being the most important.
2. Political Violence, I think the entire nation has viewed the aftermath of the Shobashobane massacre on T.V. news. This causes fear and trauma resulting in the movement of children, youth and families to urban areas without possessing the necessary survival skills.
3. Cultural Reasons, in Zulu culture girls have economic value in that they command a dowry (lobola). Therefore, they are protected while boys are not.
4. Poverty, without contraception the large families find living conditions oppressive and young children may be forced to go to the town, in this case, Port Shepstone in search of employment. Usually these children come from rural areas such as Paddock, Izingolweni and Gclima and instead of finding jobs they find themselves in dire straits on the streets.
5. Single Parent Families, once again the cultural factor operates. Fathers may be migrant workers who leave wives with children in the rural areas. In the absence of a father figure boys tend to leave homes in search of 'their fortune' but may eventually end up on the street.
6. The Pull Factors such as assistance programmes, money to be earned and the glamour of the city life attracts boys from surrounding rural areas to Port Shepstone.
7. Other Factors such as abuse in the home, lack of educational opportunities, large families and undue influence where traditional chiefs wield control over people all contribute to the street child problem in this region.

9. In your position as both social worker and street child committee member, what is your assessment of the Khayaletu Project ?

I would consider it as a successful programme because the street child is given an opportunity to have a home (shelter), food, education, as well as a sense of security and belonging. If you take away these services then the street child is certain to degenerate to the level of delinquency. However, the Khayaletu Project with the assistance of its street coordinator intervene at a critical stage in the life of local street children, that is when they find themselves alone and miserable in the streets of Port Shepstone during the early stages of street life.

10. What are some of the needs of street children in Port Shepstone ?

- (i) Food
- (ii) Shelter
- (iii) Clothes
- (iv) Education
- (v) Love

11. Do you think that the street child problem in Port Shepstone warrants the services of a street coordinator ?

Most certainly. Not only is there a need for the services of people like Khayaletu's street coordinator who understands the plight of street children because he was one himself but we can also do with more help from professionals and other people from the community.

In the street coordinator, the street children perceive a father figure, a leader, a source of understanding and a source of comfort. He also assists them with clothing, teaches them to earn money and develop values such as stability and honesty which will assist them in the process of reintegration.

12. Do you have any recommendations for appropriate programmes which could be designed to address the street child problem ?

The government, community and local authority should intervene at familial level. It should be emphasized that parents need to know their responsibilities towards their children. Accordingly they should be encouraged to plan smaller families so that they are capable of maintaining their dependants.

Education of the rural population about the value of employment in order to achieve subsistence and sustenance should be a priority. A change of attitude in rural inhabitants towards marriage and child bearing will be an important step towards reducing family complements.

Laws must be made that render irresponsible parents liable for prosecution. These laws must be enforced by specialised enforcement agencies.

The government must be committed towards addressing the street child problem. Perhaps providing reconstruction and development (RDP) funds to organisations will assist them towards making in-roads into the problem.

Termination of interview

6.3.3 In March 1997 an interview was conducted with an Inspector of the SAPS who has extensive experience with street children. A transcript of this interview appears below.

1. How many street children do you estimate to be in the Port Shepstone area ?
Between thirty to forty.

2. Where are they located ?

Usually in the streets where they beg, especially at night.

3. What programmes have been established to assist street children ?

In Port Shepstone there is a street child committee and in Margate there is the Themba Project headed by a businessman. The Themba Project has numerous programmes. Firstly an attempt is made at meeting some of the immediate needs such as food and clothing. Secondly, they are discouraged from begging and instead taught to become 'useful' so that they have skills to earn a living.

4. Does the SAPS have any assistance programmes for street children ?

There are no programmes due to a lack of funds and manpower.

5. What is the SAPS policy in respect of street children ?

I think that we adopt a sympathetic attitude towards street children. There is no 'witch-hunt' or harassment of these children. We leave them alone if they have done nothing wrong. Our policy is one of non-interference.

6. What is the SAPS policy towards street children who have committed an offence?

In keeping with our policy of non-interference the necessary SAPS unit would investigate. For example, if it is a drug related offence then the Narcotics unit would become involved. In the event of a criminal offence then the CID would investigate.

7. Have any street children have been arrested this year ?

Not any that I know of.

8. Do you foresee any programmes being initiated by the SAPS ?

I don't foresee any such developments because the community programmes such as Khayaletu and Themba are adequate.

9. Are you satisfied with the SAPS's approach to street children ?

I really don't know how to respond to this question.

Termination of interview

6.4 Synthesis

The informants were in most cases involved in some aspect of intervention. As anticipated they possessed an in-depth understanding of the scope of the street child problem in Port Shepstone. The salient points of these interviews are as follows.

According to the chairman the street child programme was a community response to the needs of street children. Reintegrating children into society was the ultimate aim of the programme and education was considered to be an important strategy in realising this aim. This informant expressed disappointment in the lack of governmental initiatives to address the problem.

The street coordinator attributed his sincere interest in street children to personal experience. As a street coordinator and former street child he was aware of the harsh realities that accompanied streetlife. According to this informant the street child faced a life of marginalisation and deprivation. His intention was to assist street children in Port Shepstone towards reintegration into society. This informant also was of the opinion that education could play a vital role in successful intervention.

The social worker considered the efforts of the street child committee to be a valuable attempt at addressing the street child problem in Port Shepstone. During her interaction with street children, their families and members of the street child committee she was able to evaluate the etiology, magnitude of the street child problem and approaches at addressing it in Port Shepstone. It was her educated opinion that intervention should be state and community driven with assistance being offered at the micro, meso and macro-levels.

A common element among these three informants was their belief that the street child problem was on the increase while intervention programmes were inadequate due a lack of state involvement.

As far as the police inspector was concerned, he displayed a superficial knowledge of the street child problem as compared with the previous three informants. The inspector was aware of street children in his jurisdiction due to their visibility. This informant attributed his limited knowledge about street children to the policy of non-interference adopted by the South African Police Services, caused by a severe shortage of resources.

The information provided by the informants was indicative of the depth of their knowledge in respect of the street child problem in Port Shepstone, this has contributed not only to the value of this particular empirical study but to the study in general.

6.5 A Socio-Educational Exploration of the Origin and Activities of the Khayaletu Project as Background to the Interviews with the Street Children

The aim of this section of the report is to enlighten readers about the origins and activities of the Khayaletu Project as well as the status of the street child within the parameters of the study. Consequently the information is presented within the framework of a socio-educational study with emphasis placed on the search for solutions to the street child problem.

Numerous questions relating to the values operating in the shelter played a significant role in the evolution of this exploration. These questions were : Why did the shelter come into existence ? Who initiated it ? How does it function ? Who are its executives ? How are funds acquired and disbursed ? What impact has the shelter had on street children ? Is there a future for the shelter and its inmates ? Are programmes such as Khayaletu a solution to the street child problem?

6.5.1 A Historical Survey of Khayaletu

The word Khayaletu means "*our home*". The Khayaletu Project itself was initiated by the local Supervisor for National Child Welfare and Supervisor for Child Welfare Social Workers in the Port Shepstone Region. Using the 'South Coast Herald', a local newspaper to place an advertisement she was able to hold an inaugural meeting for persons interested in the plight of street children on 19 November 1993.

At a meeting on 19 November 1993 a Committee was chosen and began its sterling work since inception. The projected aim as at December 1993 were : Phase I - To begin a feeding scheme for street children so as to wean them away from street life. Phase II - To establish a shelter which would eventually develop into a children's home. Phase III - To work towards reintegrating street children into society.

6.5.2 Evolution of the Khayaletu Project

Initially three qualified social workers employed by the Child Welfare formed the core of the newly constituted Street Child Committee.

During the infancy of the project interaction with street children revealed that Phase I was inadequate and a shelter was desirable if inroads were to be made at curbing the problem.

In pursuit of their objectives the street child committee approached organisations such as the Ithuba Trust and the President's Children Fund for financial assistance. At the time of this study the researcher was only aware of the Ithuba Trust responding positively to Khayaletu's appeal for financial assistance.

Against the above background the street child committee was becoming increasingly aware that the project would exist indefinitely because :

- (i) The process of reintegrating street children 'back to their families' is a slow process.
- (ii) There was evidence of a continuous growth in the number of street children in Port Shepstone.

By 1994 the Street Child Project was advancing in influence with the support that it received from various organisations and institutions such as St Katharine's Church, Ziphakamisa, The Marburg Haven and Port Shepstone Child and Family Welfare.

In order to implement Phase II (the acquisition of a shelter) attempts were made on 25 May 1994 to purchase a property in Izotsha (a suburb in Port Shepstone). Unfortunately this project did not materialise and the shelter was only acquired towards the end of 1996 in the Settler's Park, which is situated in the CBD of Port Shepstone.

Today the Khayaletu Project is a recognised and respected institution which is functioning at its optimum. However, there is still scope for the development of suitable educational programmes. Unfortunately this is a rather difficult task given the current economic and legislative restraints.

6.5.3 The Organisational and Functional Structure of the Khayaletu Project

6.5.3.1 Organisational Structure

The office bearers of the Port Shepstone Street Child Committee is as follows :

Table 6.2

Chairman	Archdeacon	Overall control
Secretary	Social Worker	Professional assistance / secretarial services.
Treasurer	South African Police	Collection and administration of committee funds.
Feeding Scheme Coordinator	Social Worker	Supervises feeding programmes.
Members	Marburg Child Welfare Practical Ministeries Correctional Services Ziphakamise Ziphakamise Marburg Haven	The members assist with miscellaneous duties.

The above committee functions as the executive of the Khayaletu Project and their duties include raising funds, exercising control over the shelter and employment of a street coordinator , who receives a remuneration of approximately seven hundred rands per month.

6.5.3.2 Functional Structure

The programme offered by the Khayaletu Project, functions across three levels at present. These are :

- (i) Street Co-ordination, where the street coordinator assists destitute children who live on the streets and also invites them to participate in the services offered by the Khayaletu Project.
- (ii) A Basic Needs Programme, where a group of resident street children are given food, shelter and clothing. This also includes a peripheral group who may 'join and leave the programme at liberty'.
- (iii) An Intensive Basic Needs Programme oriented towards reintegration, where resident street children are not only given assistance towards satisfaction of some of their basic needs but attention is given to their educational and socialisation needs so as to pave the way for their eventual reintegration into society.

6.5.3.3 The following plates depicts some aspects of life in the Khayaletu Shelter.



Plate 1: The Khayaletu Shelter in the forested Settler's Park of Port Shepstone



Plate 2: Inside the Khayaletu Shelter



Plate 3: Children from Khayaletu at work

6.6 Analysis of Research Data : Profile of the Street Child

In the following paragraphs the results obtained during the interviews with the participants (street children) will be discussed. Data analysis will focus on the origin, age, occupation of the parents of the street children, family size, the various attitudes prevalent amongst the participants and their aspirations. The researcher deemed it necessary to consider the factors such as age, origin and family size because :

- (i) this would allow one to compare the etiological factors that prevail in the area from which the participants originated
- (ii) a comprehensive profile of the street child could be formulated
- (iii) the information would be meaningful and lend itself to further application

The questionnaire utilized during the interviews is attached as Addendum C.

6.6.1 Origin of the Street Children found in Port Shepstone

TABLE 6.3

TOWN	NUMBER	PROPORTION
Mount Frere (Transkei)	1	7,1%
Flastaff (Transkei)	1	7,1%
Umtata (Transkei)	1	7,1%
Bizana	3	21,9%
Harding	1	7,1%
Port Edward	1	7,1%
Gelima	1	7,1%
Durban and Surrounding	1	7,1%
Boboyi and Surrounding	4	28,4%

Table showing origins of the street participants.

The above data indicates that the street children have come from 'far and wide'. Those originating from Umtata which is approximately three hundred kilometers, away have come the furthest. The above pattern seems to suggest that Port Shepstone is the most attractive centre for the street children in this region.

6.6.2 Ages of Participants

TABLE 6.4

Age of Participant	Number of Participants in Each Age Group	Proportion of Sample
14	2	14,3%
15	2	14,3%
16	5	35,6%
17	3	21,5%
18	2	14,3%
Totals	N = 14	100%

Table showing ages of participants.

The ages of the street children in the sample range between fourteen and eighteen years. The highest number of street children (5) were found to be sixteen years of age, which is 35,6 % of the sample.

Although the participants were quoting their ages with an air of confidence it was difficult to believe them at times because they appeared much younger than the age which they declared.

6.6.3 Occupation of Parents

TABLE 6.5

Parent of Participant	Occupation Type	Participants with Fathers in Appropriate Occupations	Proportion of Sample
Father	Unemployed	6	43%
	Labourer	2	14,3%
	Deceased	2	14,3%
	Miner	1	7,1%
	Migration Worker	1	7,1%
	Security Guard	1	7,1%
	Mechanic	1	7,1%
Totals		N = 14	100%

Table showing occupation category of participants' fathers.

TABLE 6.6

Parent of Participation	Occupation Type	Participants with Mothers in Appropriate Occupation	Proportion of Sample
Mother	Unemployed	7	50%
	Domestic	2	14,3%
	Deceased	3	21,5%
	Educator	1	7,1%
	Nurse	1	7,1%
Totals		N = 14	100%

Table showing occupation category of participants' mothers.

The above statistics indicate that the sample originate from poor socio-economic conditions because 43% of the fathers and 50% of the mothers concerned are unemployed.

6.6.4 Number of Children in Family

TABLE 6.7

Number of Children in Family	Frequency of Respondents Abandonment corresponding to the relevant family size	proportion of Sample
2	1	7,1%
3	4	28,7%
4	2	14,3%
5	1	7,1%
6	1	7,1%
7	1	7,1%
8	2	14,3%
11	2	14,3%
Totals	N = 14	100%

Table showing family size and corresponding home abandonment.

Considering the fact that parents are excluded then the above pattern suggests that the majority of the sample have originated from large families.

6.6.5 Chronological Position in Family

TABLE 6.8

Chronological Position of Child	Frequency of Home Abandonment corresponding to Chronological Position	Proportion of Sample
First-born	2	14,3%
Middle-Child	3	28,7%
Last-born	9	57%
Totals	N = 14	100%

Table showing relationship between chronological birth and abandonment of the home.

Children who are born last seem to be prone towards leaving home because 57% who left home fall into this group as opposed to only 14,3% of the sample being 'firstborn'. This may be due to less attention given to them by their parents and a lack of resources available for the upkeep at home.

6.6.6 Ages at which the Home was Abandoned

TABLE 6.9

Chronological Ages of Child	Frequency at which the home was abandoned at particular ages	Proportion of Sample
12	1	7,1%
13	3	21,5%
14	5	35,7%
15	3	21,5%
16	1	7,1%
18	1	7,1%
Totals	N = 14	100%

Table showing the relationship between age and frequency of home abandonment.

It appears that the highest frequency of children abandoning their homes occurs between the ages of thirteen to fifteen years (11 boys which represents 58,7% of the sample).

6.6.7 Reasons for Abandoning Home

TABLE 6.10

Reason for Abandonment of Home	Frequency of Abandonment by Child	Proportion of Sample
Poverty	7	50%
Desire for Freedom	3	21,45%
Abuse	3	21,45%
Family Disintegration	1	7,1%
Totals	N = 14	100%

Table showing reasons for abandonment of home.

Poverty was the predominant reason causing the street children to leave their homes.

6.6.8 Attitudes of the Street Child

6.6.8.1 Attitudes Towards Street Life

TABLE 6.11

Attitude	Number	Proportion of Sample
Content or Happy with Street Children	2	14,3%
Unhappy with Street Life	12	85,7%
Totals	N = 14	100%

Table showing attitude of participants towards street life.

6.6.8.2 Attitude Towards Previous Home

TABLE 6.12

Attitude	Number	Proportion of Sample
Have a Yearning for their Previous Homes	7	50%
Have no Desire to Return Home	7	50%
Totals	N = 14	100%

Table showing participants attitude towards home.

Although the majority of the sample 12 (85,7%) are unhappy with street life only 7 (50%) yearn for their homes. This reinforces their disillusionment with the quality of life in their previous homes.

6.6.8.3 Attitude Towards School

TABLE 6.13

Attitude	Number	Proportion of Sample
Street Children that desire to attend school	11	78,6%
Street Children that do not desire to attend school	3	21,4%
Totals	N = 14	100%

Table showing attitude towards school.

A large number of respondents 11 (78,6%) of the sample desire to attend school as opposed to 3 (21,4%) who have no desire of returning to school.

6.6.8.4 Attitude Towards 'Normal' Children

All fourteen respondents consider the 'ordinary' (home based) child to be more fortunate than themselves (stress based). The reasons furnished were:

- (i) Normal children have parents who care for them
- (ii) Normal children have access to education.
- (iii) Normal children have home and are clean.

Furthermore, a large proportion of the sample 13 (92,9%) have a desire to be like the home based counterparts. The reasons furnished for this are as follows :

TABLE 6.14
ATTITUDE TOWARDS 'NORMAL' children

Lifestyle which Participants consider desirable in home based children	Number of Participants identifying with corresponding Lifestyle	Proportion of Sample
Ordinary children enjoy good lives and go to school	11	78,7%
Ordinary children are a part of society	1	7,1%
Dress Well	1	7,1%
No Comment	1	7,1%
Totals	N = 14	100%

Table showing participants attitude towards the lifestyle of 'ordinary' children.

6.6.8.5 Attitude Towards Shelter

The majority of the resident street children (80%) of the sample indicated that they were happy with living conditions experienced at the shelter and therefore, would not consider leaving it for life on the streets. This indicates that the street children do have the desire for a stable environment.

6.6.9 Tenure at the Khayaletu Shelter

Keeping in mind the objective of the Khayaletu Project, which is inter alia aimed at reintegrating street children into society there is no intention of providing any street child with permanent tenure, four of the resident children (40% of sample) were of the opinion that they could live indefinitely at the shelter. Six (60%) of the sample were aware that tenure is temporary.

6.6.10 Future Plans of the Street Children

TABLE 6.15

Future Goals of Participants	Number of Participants Identifying with a Particular Goal	Proportion of Sample
Join the S.A.P.S.	4	33,4%
Security Officer	2	16,7%
Doctor	1	8,3%
Nun	1	8,3%
Driver	1	8,3%
Vague about their future occupations	3	25%
Totals	N = 12	100%

Table showing future goals of participants.

All twelve believe that their goals are attainable. This is rather naive thinking on their part.

6.6.11 Political Awareness

A large number of the sample, 11 (78,6 %) were able to indicate that Nelson Mandela is the president of South Africa while only 3 (21,4 %) of the sample were ignorant of the identity of their State President.

The majority of the sample, 6 (42,8 %) believe that the President is incapable of alleviating their misery as opposed to 3 (35,7 %) who believe that he can assist by providing more schools, making donations and creating employment.

6.6.12 Access to Health Care

The following pattern emerged in respect of access to health care :

- (a) 3 (21,4 %) have been attended to by a doctor.
- (b) 4 (28,6 %) have been attended to by only a nurse.
- (c) 7 (50 %) have received medical attention in a hospital.

The above indicates that the street children have access to medical care facilities.

6.6.13 Literacy Level

Twelve respondents (85,7%) are able to read and write while only two are unable to read or write.

6.6.14 Desire to Return to their Homes and School

- (i) A large number of respondents, 10 (71,4 %) indicated that they would like to return to their original homes while 4 (28,6 %) indicated that they do not desire a return to their original homes.
- (ii) A similar pattern emerged in respect of their desire to return to school. Nine respondents (64,3 %) indicated that they would like to return to school compared to 5 (35,7 %) who have no desire of returning to school.

6.6.15 Dangers of 'Street-Life'

The majority of the sample, 12 (85,7 %) indicated that street life presents numerous hazards in the form of violence, stabbings, murder, assaults, drug abuse and a lack of shelter. Two respondents (14,3 %) indicated that street life offers no danger to them. This suggests that the majority of street children perceive street life to be hostile and violent.

6.6.16 Overall Attitude of Respondents

A large number of respondents, 10 (71,4 %) indicated that they would discourage others from becoming streetwise. None would recommend others to choose the streets as their abode while 4 (28,6 %) did not respond to this question.

The above indicates that street children are not in support of street life. This is not surprising because life on the streets is indeed a hostile environment for growing children.

6.7 A Commentary on the Data Obtained in the Micro-Study

The data obtained in the micro-study will be of little value if handled in a clinical fashion. Therefore, in this section the information gathered will be placed in it's socio-educational context.

6.7.1 Assumptions

At the outset it must be spelt out that it is difficult to sustain assumptions purely because one is confronted with a group of virtual 'unknowns'. Under the circumstances the researcher is left to his own discretion when evaluating whether respondents were being honest or dishonest.

Secondly the questions used in the study were fielded over a broad spectrum of areas such as family background, life on the streets, attitudes and desires. The reason for this approach was to gather as much information on the respondents as possible based on the assumption that he/she would be willing to disclose such information.

Finally a westernised approach was adopted where it was assumed that respondents would not regard the investigation as interference and therefore, offer their complete co-operation.

6.7.2 The Khayaletu Project in an Overall View

*** The Assistance Programme in Perspective**

The Khayaletu Project was conceived as necessary by a group of concerned social workers who responded to a social need. As such the efforts were initially confined to satisfying the immediate needs of street children. These immediate needs were food and clothing . Later on there was pressure on the street child committee to provide permanent shelter for the street children in order to sustain their long term goal of reintegration for the street children.

In the normal interaction with street children the street coordinator made informal attempts at ascertaining information on the street children in his care. This was only a feeble attempt and no information profile was made or maintained in respect of the street children. This is a significant oversight because information on the street child has to be collated and maintained for various reasons such as :

- (i) Establishing contact with parents.
- (ii) Appraisal of the child's educational achievements.
- (iii) Appraisal of the child's educational needs.
- (iv) Designing suitable educational or life-skills programmes.
- (v) Gaining admission for the child at school.

In keeping with the 'loose arrangement' at Khayaletu the street coordinator displayed an inadequate knowledge of the past and even the origins of many of the street children.

There is consensus that every person is unique. Street children also possess individual differences. However, a point of concern is that alongside their individuality there is also the possibility for the existence of potential psychopathological problems due to their traumatised life.

These problems could present as :

- (i) poor interpersonal relationships reflected in behaviour such as aggression, withdrawal and reaction to discipline.
- (ii) emotional disturbances resulting in bed-wetting.
- (iii) psychosis.

In the absence of appropriate information the above problems which may be inherent in the street children could be easily overlooked. This would undermine the assistance programmes intended to help the street child. For example, during this study the following case emerged :

Researcher : Why did you leave the shelter?

Alex : It was because of Bonko. He used to hit me . That's why I left.

Researcher : Would you go back to the shelter?

Alex : Not if Bonko is still there.

In the above interview Alex was a Khayaletu deserter who was located in Marburg, a suburb of Port Shepstone. From what Alex disclosed it seems that he left the comforts of the shelter for a life on the streets because of aggression towards him. The street coordinator was unaware of the cause of Alex's desertion. Furthermore, because the street coordinator cum care worker was unaware of the aggression by Bonko towards Alex and others this problem went unnoticed. The other younger boys all suffered assaults by Bonko, but were afraid to report this because they felt that Bonko as an elder was entitled to 'give them a hiding 'if he considered it necessary. Against this background the need for an information profile on each child is important because it could reveal patterns which signify undercurrents prevalent as well as changes taking place which could signal the need for appropriate action. In this particular instance the reason for Bonko's aggression could have been explored and harmony restored in the shelter.

*** Street Children's Dependence on the Shelter**

The majority of the sample, 80 % indicated that they would not consider leaving the shelter on their own accord. Some were even of the opinion that they could make the shelter their permanent abode. Such attitudes firstly, indicate that the street children look forward to stability in their lives.

Secondly, it is also indicative of a growing dependence on the shelter for support, food and shelter. This means that the children are focused on their immediate needs instead of considering the reality of breaking away from the confines of the shelter and into the world of work with its concomitant independence. This is a danger of housing street children in shelters. Their survival skills can become eroded in the absence of appropriate development programmes. Therefore, shelters need to be clear about their programmes and the impact it will have on the lives of the children they intend to assist.

*** Attitudes and Future Plans of the Street Child**

Although 85,7 % respondents are unhappy with life on the streets only 50 % miss their homes. This implies that they view street life as the lesser evil. Considering the data on reasons for abandoning their homes 50 % cited poverty and 21,45 % cited abuse. This emphasizes their disillusion with their former homes.

Considering their attitude towards school a high percentage of the sample, 78,6 % have a desire to attend school. This is not surprising because the respondents associate education with social mobility and an acceptable lifestyle. Furthermore, many respondents have impressive plans in respect of their future. In this regard many hope to become either doctors, policemen and nurses.

Many are in their late teens with only a grade four education and no 'concrete evidence' such as application for admission to schools or even preparation towards meeting admission requirements to indicate that they are going to return to school in pursuit of their 'future plans'. The tragedy surrounding the attitudes and hopes of the respondents is that although they may possess the ability and aptitude the majority will not realise the goals that they have set simply because they are not receiving the necessary support that they deserve. Furthermore, it would be necessary for the participants to enter mainstream education in the hope of pursuing their aspirations. Unfortunately many of these children would present as 'misfits' in the classroom due to their existing handicaps such as advanced age and academic deprivation.

Once again the above serves to highlight the disadvantage of the Khayaletu Project.

* **Working towards Solutions at Khayaletu**

The programmes at Khayaletu should be orientated towards humanitarian aid to street children who are still living on city streets pending their reconciliation with their families or alternatively pending their reintegration into society. In the case of projects similar to Khayaletu there may be a digression from the intended objectives because the assistance programmes are rudimentary due to a lack of resources. Consequently children are merely exposed to a 'safe haven' rather than a programme which is 'fully focused' towards the reintegration of street children into society

If projects such as Khayaletu have the intention of working towards solutions then the nature and structure of programmes should include the following :

- (i) **Street Outreach**
This would entail providing primary health care, education and advice to children on the streets . Case studies should be compiled, children's families contacted and reconciliation effected if possible.
- (ii) **Drop-In Centres**
In this programme the peripheral group of street children would be afforded the opportunity to wash, shower and even partake of meals in addition to the services offered in the outreach programme.
- (iii) **Shelters**
The shelter should be oriented towards long term appraisal of children who cannot be reconciled with their families. It should offer a stable environment where adjustment and 'catch-up' programmes are conducted.
- (iv) **Bridging Programmes**
Children who have little or no formal education are assisted towards bridging this gap in their education. In this programme education deficiencies are identified and addressed.

- (v) **Homes**
Children who cannot return to their families should be placed in foster homes or children's homes. Older children should be given the opportunity to develop skills that are marketable. This would assist towards reintegration into society.
- (vi) **Return to Mainstream Education**
Children with academic potential should be assisted towards entering the formal education system or alternatively placed in a skills training programme in accordance to their aptitude, ability and interest.
- (vii) **Support Programme**
The problems which drive children from their homes in the first instance cannot be resolved overnight. Therefore, children who are reconciled with their families will not necessarily be rehabilitated. Children in these circumstances should be aware that they can still avail themselves of the services offered by the respective organisation in times of need. Support, therefore, could take the form of assistance such as giving advice to children, assisting families with food hampers, assisting children with school fees and uniforms.

6.8 Concluding Remarks

It must be appreciated that the etiological factors of the street child problem is multi-factorial in nature. Factors in the home such as abuse and poverty, factors in the child himself such as rebellious tendencies and a desire for freedom and even negative experiences at school may all work collusively to pressure the child into leaving home for the streets. Against this background it would be indeed naive to think that the problem can be dissipated with the 'wave of a magic wand'. There is no 'quick-fix' solution to the street child problem in South Africa because the country is experiencing unprecedented transformation on social, economic and political levels which overshadows existing problems and even aggravates existing problems.

For example the Governments's RDP and growth, employment and redistribution (GEAR) programmes aimed at assisting disadvantaged groups have been declared failures (Business Report 1997 : 1). Instead unemployment has increased causing increased poverty levels (Sunday Times 1997 : 3).

In the above circumstances one has to work towards finding solutions to the street child problem using a multi-functional approach. This means that attention must be directed towards programmes that are :

- *sustainable
- *have legal recognition where necessary
- *pedagogically sound
- *not dead-end but of utility value or academically compatible with mainstream education.
- *user friendly
- *take cognisance of the child, his circumstances and needs.

In working towards solutions there must be a spirit of flexibility so as to facilitate the modification or even the rejection of inappropriate programmes in favour of suitable programmes in order to progress towards the ultimate goal of providing help to children in need. This help should eventually translate into well grounded support in terms of psychological, educational and even material assistance.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARISED FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study addressed itself to determining and analysing the street child problem in South Africa with the following general aims in mind :

- * to understand the street child phenomenon in all its facets
- * to design suitable programmes aimed at addressing the problem in South Africa.

7.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The following were the aims of this investigation :

- * to place the street child problem in its socio-educational context
- * to identify social dynamics which act as precursors to the phenomenon
- * to identify educational dynamics which act as precursors to the phenomenon
- * to explore the quality of life of street children
- * to investigate the educational needs of street children
- * to explore perceptions, aspirations and survival skills of street children
- * to ascertain community knowledge, perceptions and attitudes towards street children
- * to provide recommendations for future assistance strategies

7.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN TABLE 7.1

Literature study	Empirical study
1. The street child problem is on the increase in South Africa.	1. The number of street children fluctuates and is expected to increase.

2.	The etiological factors are multi-factorial and include aspects such as poverty, unemployment, abuse, poor family dynamics and rapid urbanisation.	2.	The precursors to the problem are primarily in the child, his family and to a certain extent the community. Aspects such as abuse and poverty are aggravating factors.
3.	Street children in South Africa are predominantly black males.	3.	Black males form the greatest percentage of street children but there are female street children as well.
4.	Street children lead a marginalised existence.	4.	The street children were cut-off from society and desired reintegration.
5.	Generally street children have a low level of education.	5.	The sample comprised of respondents who were all educationally deprived.
6.	Street children have future plans.	6.	Every respondent anticipated a bright future.
7.	Many street children desire to return to their families but find it difficult.	7.	Half of the respondents indicated a desire to return to their former homes.
8.	Streetlife is hazardous for children.	8.	Most respondents (85,7 %), indicated that streetlife was dangerous and cited numerous incidents such as assaults and murder as being common.

9.	Streetlife can impact negatively on the physical and mental health of the child.	9.	Many of the respondents were neglected and showed signs of inadequate physical and emotional development.
10.	Community awareness of the street child is satisfactory and an attitude of compassion usually exists.	10.	Respondents became aware of these children because of their visibility on the streets or through the media.
11.	Intervention programmes are traditionally containment, cure and prevention.	11.	Intervention was found to be primarily containment and cure.
12.	Streetlife should not be perceived as only a disadvantage.	12.	Streetlife was perceived as a negative phenomenon.
13.	Street children and their families require support.	13.	The street child problem should be understood and the appropriate authorities need to address it.
14.	Generally NGO's and concerned individuals respond to the problem.	14.	Government at all levels should assist community organisations towards addressing the problem.
15.	Intervention strategies are inadequate due to insufficient resources.	15.	The quality of intervention is influenced by the resources available.
16.	Numerous programmes have evolved to address the street child problem. Each one has its specific advantages and shortcomings but still plays a vital role in an attempt to address the problem.	16.	There is a need for continuous research in order to understand the nature and scope of the street child problem in a changing society so that suitable intervention programmes may be designed.

17.	The street child develops numerous survival skills which help him / her survive on the street.	17.	A large number of the sample had gained knowledge and skills that enable them to generate an income.
18.	The street child problem is perceived as a socio-educational problem which should be addressed by programmes which include state and community participation	18.	The street child problem is a socio-educational problem and should be addressed by participative programmes which include the state, para-statal structures and community representation.
19.	Etiological factors of the street child problem are poverty, abuse, urbanisation and family disintegration. Consequently, the street child becomes marginalised, deprived and maladjusted. Under the circumstances the ultimate aim of intervention is the assistance of the child as a gateway towards reintegration into society.	19.	The majority of participants cited abuse and poverty as the reasons why they abandoned their homes. Against this background intervention should be needs oriented in an attempt at socialisation and reintegration of the street child.
7.4 EXTENT TO WHICH AIMS OF THE STUDY HAVE BEEN MET IN TABLE 7.2			
AIMS		FINDINGS	
7.4.1	To place the street child phenomenon in its socio-educational context.	The literature study and empirical research indicates that street children should be regarded as a socio-educational problem accompanied by community participation in intervention strategies.	

7.4.2 To identify social dynamics which act as precursors to the problem	Social factors which play a significant role in causing the street child problem are poverty, political violence, urbanisation, unemployment, inadequate housing, overpopulation and family disintegration
7.4.3 To identify educational dynamics which act as precursors to the problem	The school contributes to the child's development of 'self-concept' and socialisation skills. Failure at school together with the high cost of education act as push factors causing some children to abandon schools and gravitate onto streets
7.4.4 To explore the quality of life of street children	The street child is usually deprived of the influence by supportive parents, healthy relationships between peers and educators. This generally leads to marginalisation, deprivation and emotional maladjustment
7.4.5 To investigate the educational needs of street children	In the absence of a satisfactory balance between affection and control from supportive parents and educators the street child progresses towards assumed adulthood. Such children have developed survival skills. However, they still are prone to exploitation and abuse. In these circumstances their educational needs are usually perceived as skills orientated so as to facilitate the reintegration into society

<p>7.4.6 To explore perceptions, aspirations and survival skills of street children</p>	<p>The study suggests that street life generally perpetuates deprivation, exploitation and marginalisation. Within this milieu the majority of street children wish that they can improve their circumstances. Although their skills are limited and geared towards survival, they still display the desire to pursue successful careers in society</p>
<p>7.4.7 To ascertain community knowledge, perceptions and attitudes towards street children</p>	<p>Generally the community displays a satisfactory level of awareness and their response is one of compassion towards the negative circumstances of street children. In many instances this attitude has been the precursor to intervention / assistance programmes</p>
<p>7.4.8 To provide recommendations for future research and assistance strategies</p>	<p>The street child problem is a global issue which has existed over a considerable time frame. In South Africa socio-economic conditions propagated by political transformation has not only caused an increase but also a proliferation of the street child problem. Under the circumstances intervention and assistance programmes should be tailored towards addressing the needs of the street child, be flexible, innovative and should be state, community and client driven. Reliable intervention is supplemented by ongoing research.</p>

7.5 Recommendations for Possible Solutions to the Street Child Problem in South Africa.

* Preamble

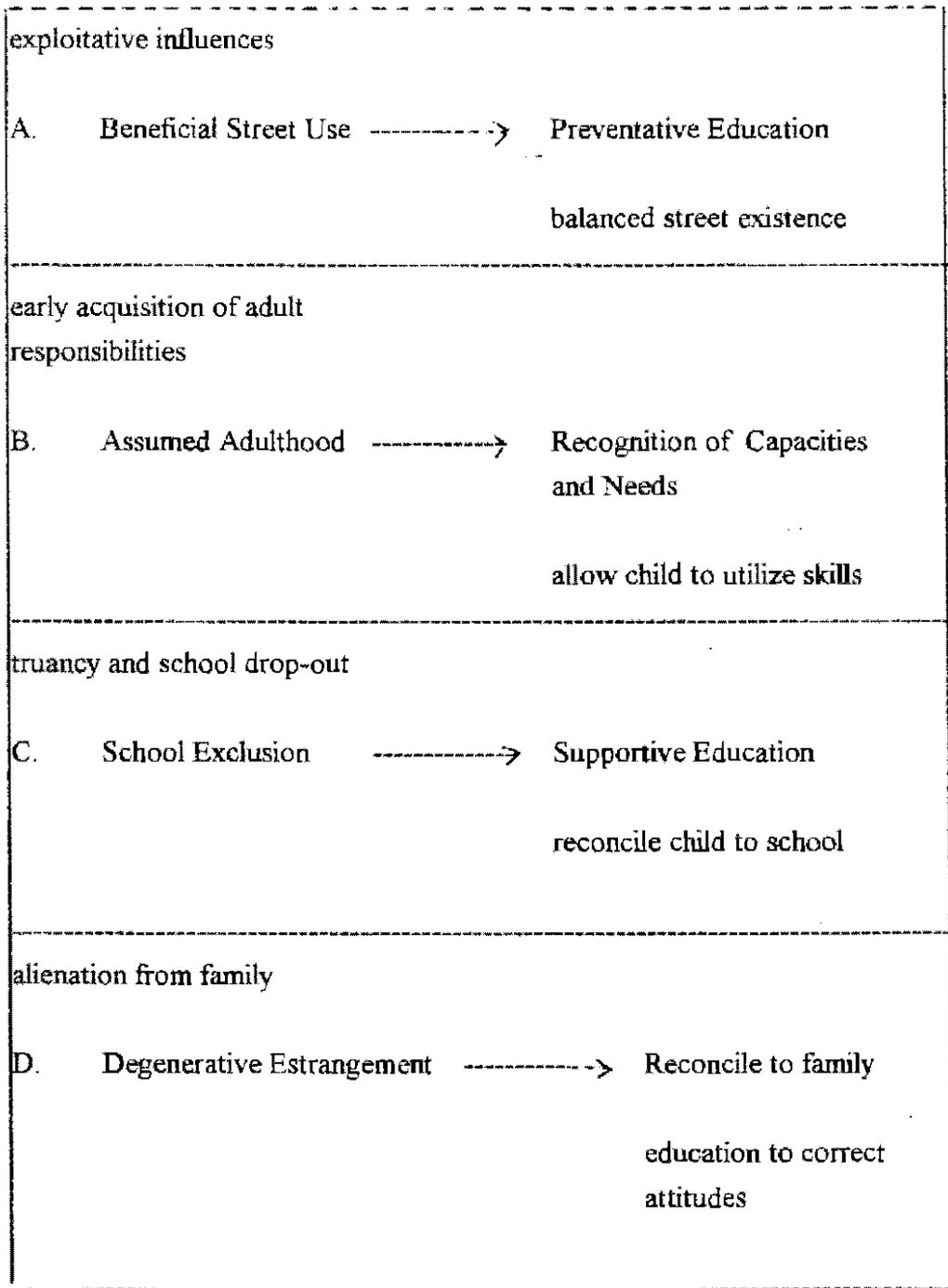
In South Africa, the divorce rate is amongst the highest in the world and in addition to this thousands of children are born outside of marriage each year (Cerrans 1992 : 12). Furthermore, the failure of education systems which are unable to fulfil their role due to their inadequacy (Cerrans 1992 : 12) together with family problems such as poor family dynamics in the form of excessive discipline, ill-treatment (Le Roux 1994 : 69) and social problems such as poverty and illiteracy (Le Roux 1994 : 69) all contribute to the street child problem in this country.

Therefore, if attempts are to be made at addressing the street child problem in South Africa, programmes need to be aimed at the familial level, the community level and also the child. In many of the street child programmes in South Africa intervention is predominantly child orientated. This approach has translated into ineffective programmes which, in some cases, offer the children the opportunity to be more comfortable on the streets. For example, the intentions of a programme which offers street children the opportunity to make use of facilities in drop-in centres at will must be examined because it may be inadvertently promoting the street child phenomenon, instead of curbing it.

In providing support to street children the concept of care must be clearly conceived. The term care has a wide meaning and embraces numerous categories. When the concept of care is applied to the street child problem it should be split into programmes aimed at providing assistance in response to physical and psychological needs instead of placing emphasis on just a single category of needs (Hanssen 1996 : 252). A possible model which incorporates this ideology is referred to as the stratified intervention model and appears follows :

The Stratified Intervention Model

Conditions \longrightarrow **Outcomes**



- Responses*

 - Custodial care
 - Open-door service
 - Family support
 - Supervised-accommodation
 - Educational outreach
 - Part-time schooling
 - Corrective-education

7.5.1 Explanation of the Model

This model is based on the assumption that the street child categorisation is accurate and meaningful so that appropriate intervention is possible. Clear classification is a starting point because the needs of particular 'groups' of street children are identified and addressed. Such an approach is problem specific and would be expected to yield a satisfactory success rate.

The above model is a modified version proposed by Williams (1993 : 831-841).

7.5.1.1 Beneficial Street Use

According to Aptekar (1991 : 326-341), street existence need not be equated with diminished developmental opportunities. In some instances, street life actually adds to cognitive growth. There is no denying that street life is potentially hazardous, but recognising the benefits for some of the children is a vital part of planning an appropriate intervention strategy.

Children in this category may possess various survival techniques. Assistance programmes at this level should complement the street child's developmental experiences so that the child will feel comfortable in the programme. This is achieved by allowing aspects of the programme to coincide with the child's experiential framework. For example, the child's ability to make toys for income or his ability to offer car wash services should be enhanced.

7.5.1.2 Assumed Adulthood

Through forced circumstances street children acquire adult responsibilities and experiences. The imposition of adult status inculcates early maturity, a demand for adult self-determination and freedom (Wright, Wittig and Kaminsky : 93).

Intervention at this level should take cognisance of the adult lifestyle. This should be reflected in provisions such as night schools, nutritional and support programmes which fit into the work patterns of street children in this category.

7.5.1.3 School Exclusion

The terms 'school drop-outs' and truants are labels that depict children as the cause of the problem. It would be preferable to use the term school exclusion as this would take away the blame from individuals who may be victims of circumstances beyond their control.

Although school education may be accessible, the dynamics relating to school exclusion may relate to 'push' and 'pull' factors. The pull factors that usually prevent parents from sending their children to school are the *twin evils*. This refers to poverty of a large group of people and the absolute necessity which this creates for the employment of children (Williams *ibid*).

Push factors are dynamics which originate from within the school environment. Some push factors include punishment, failure and demeaning teacher attitudes (Williams *ibid*). These factors often lead to humiliation and can cause children to gravitate onto streets (Schärf in Williams 1993 : 831-841).

Once children reject school education and drop out, they tend to become alienated from the education system and it becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile such children to school again. According to research in India such children do not fit into normal school because they have become used to earning money and believe in the three F's, which are food, films and freedom (Snehasadan in Williams 1993 : 831-841). The following statement by a street coordinator suggests that the situation in South Africa is no different, " We didn't want to mix children who were not interested with the children who were because this would lead to conflict" (Natal Mercury 1989 : 2).

Intervention at this level should be as follows :

- (i) Provide free meals as a means of contributing to the child's health needs because this would reduce the child's need to work in order to secure meals.
- (ii) Provide free clothing to children who are prevented from attending school due to lack of uniforms.

- (iii) Provision of teaching/learning materials for children where parents are unable to supply such materials.
- (iv) Waive school fees for poor children.
- (v) Schools can operate on two shifts to accommodate pupils in rural areas where a lack of resources exist.
- (vi) The teaching / learning situation must be one that is friendly yet inspiring.

7.5.1.4 Degenerative Estrangement

The term degenerative estrangement refers to that group of street children who avoids school and his / her home and moves to a place where he / she remains unnoticed. This alienation is self imposed. Children in such circumstances who become 'cut-off' from their families and other support networks, easily gravitate onto the streets.

Intervention at this level must be in keeping with the level of estrangement. The aim of intervention at this level will be to re-establish relationships and reconcile the child with his / her family and school in stages.

7.5.2 Evaluation of the above Model

In the above intervention strategy the *conditions* (circumstances) of the street child is identified and the child is classified in accordance to his circumstances. Thereafter, specific *outcomes* for the child are envisaged. Once this has taken place, appropriate intervention strategies are applied. This would include : skills training, family support, night school, counselling and professional services such as psychological services.

The advantages of the above strategy are :

- (i) its simplicity
- (ii) it is problem specific
- (iii) can be easily modified
- (iv) it is intended to meet the needs of child
- (v) the aims are clearly defined prior to intervention

7.6 Proposal for a Comprehensive Service Delivery Model

The purpose of this study is to identify etiological factors in respect of the street child problem in South Africa, with the intention of proposing a suitable delivery programme which may help curb the street child problem in this country. Under the circumstances the following is recommended :

7.6.1 Primary Prevention Programmes

This approach should involve at-risk communities and families. Activities should be geared towards strengthening and empowering families and communities to prevent at-risk children such as truants, school failures, abused , drop-outs, neglected, abandoned and poverty stricken individuals from making the streets their home.

It is a recognised fact that street children usually originate from families that are dysfunctional because of a combination of problems. These problems include factors such as breakdown of family support systems, extreme poverty, unemployment, poor housing, overcrowding, alcohol abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, chronic illness and the death of a parent. According to Schurink et al. (1993 : 8) multi-problem families rarely make use of support services in the community.

Therefore, at this level of intervention the expertise of local professionals and resources available at institutions such as schools, local government, industry and welfare agencies should all be mobilized into an interactive strategy where the at-risk families are given comprehensive support. This would, among others, involve the following :

- (i) Creating community awareness of the street child problem.
- (ii) Developing strong social bonds between children, their families and the community by promoting involvement between schools, families and the community.
- (iii) Develop social, cognitive and behavioural skills that will enable families to establish supportive networks.
- (iv) Establish links between professional and community networks.
- (v) Form pressure groups that will lobby for improved family support services.
- (vi) Provide consistent and valuable rewards for pro-social behaviour and actions.

7.6.2 Secondary Prevention Programmes

This approach should aim at the development of pro-active intervention actions within communities to prevent children on the street such as, working children and street children who still have regular contact or periodic contact with their families and communities from making the streets their home. For example, people should develop 'critical attitudes' where they must consider it unacceptable for children to be loitering on streets during school hours and other times of the day. In such a situation one should notify the school or appropriate authority.

In secondary intervention programmes suitably qualified street educators need to be recruited so that they may work with children at street level. Communities of origin (where the street child originated) and communities in which the street children are living should be involved in secondary intervention programmes. The services offered in this programme ought to be available twenty four hours a day.

In communities where the street child has settled street educators should perform the following duties among others :

- (i) Identify and establish initial contact with new street arrivals.
- (ii) Befriend the children and develop a relationship of trust and mutual respect.
- (iii) Educate the children in aspects relating to health and personal safety.
- (iv) Attempt to meet the immediate needs of the street child in respect of food, safety and shelter.
- (v) Monitor the magnitude of the street child problem and maintain pertinent statistics in this respect.
- (vi) Motivate street children to seek alternatives to the street.
- (vii) Appraise the community attitudes towards street children and identify potential reservoirs of support for the assistance programme.
- (viii) Ascertain the circumstances that confront the street child and the implications that they have on the relevant group of street children.
- (ix) Every attempt should be made to reach a new street arrival at the street educator's earliest convenience.

Where street educators target communities of origin, emphasis should be focused on the following aspects :

- (i) Poor families with children at schools must be identified.
- (ii) Potential school drop-outs and premature school leavers must be identified.
- (iii) Children being abused should be identified by liaising with relevant role players such as school guidance counsellors, clinic sisters, the police and social workers.
- (iv) Families and children at-risk must be assisted towards making contact with community assistance programmes and other relevant resources (Schurink 1996 : 1).

7.6.3 Tertiary Prevention Programmes

In these programmes intervention activities should be tailored to the individual needs of street children. These programmes should include early identification, outreach, immediate care, intake and assessment and reintegration of street children with their natural families.

The aims of the programme should include the following :

- (i) Identification of children at risk of becoming street children by liaising with schools, welfare agencies and outreach workers.
- (ii) Creation of community awareness of the problem with the intention of receiving their support.
- (iii) Recruitment and training of outreach educators.
- (iv) Provision of skills training and support services to at-risk children and their families.
- (v) Facilitation of networking and coordination of services between all relevant parties. For example, police, child care committee, at-risk families, children in need of assistance and the relevant welfare agency.
- (vi) Establishing and promoting collaboration between the relevant state departments, community based organisations, non-governmental organisations and interested members of the community.
- (vii) Developing criteria for evaluating the success rate of the programme.

- (viii) Establishing an acceptable and uniform record keeping system. This system should accommodate personal profiles such as gender, age, community of origin, educational level, history of substance abuse, reasons for being on the street, misdemeanours, health status, physical characteristics and time spent on the streets.
- (ix) Provision for recommending children into a range of alternative services within the framework of the South African social welfare dispensation.
- (x) Allowance must be made for the state, community service providers and experts involved with street children to jointly develop guidelines for family and individual assessment , family support services, appropriate programme content necessary to cater for the needs of different children, criteria for financing and registration of shelters.
- (xi) The development, implementation and appraisal of street child programmes.

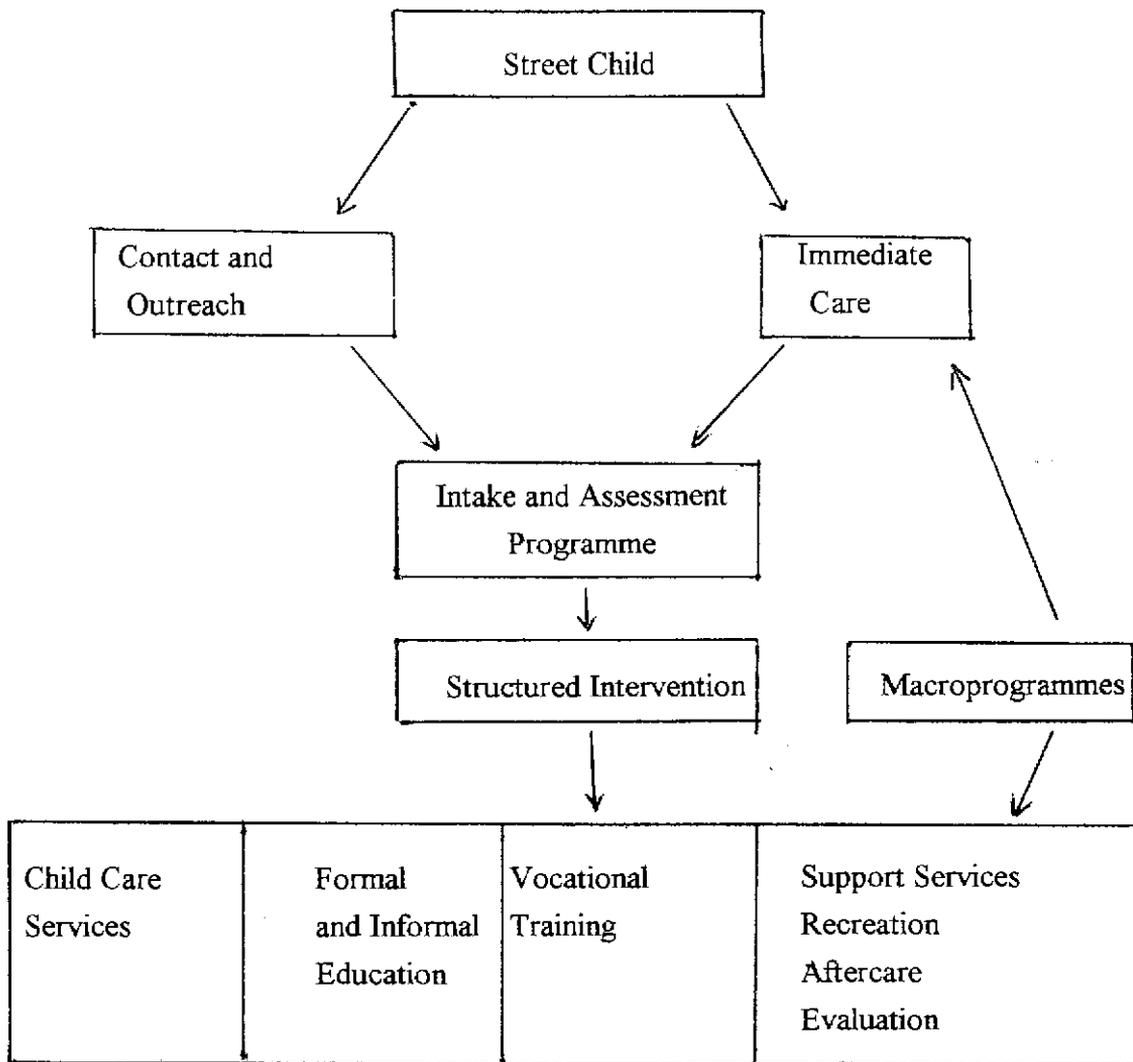
In tertiary programmes efforts are made to assist the street child as a matter of importance. As mentioned previously the assistance programmes need to be split into activities geared towards psychological and physical help. In the case of psychological help the following guidelines are proposed by counsellors and care workers :

- (i) Recognise the needs and perceptions that differentiate the target population from other child groups.
- (ii) One must be aware of the fact that the child needs to be perceived as an individual, rather than as a member of a street gang or general group of street children.
- (iii) Accept that professional 'helpers' may be perceived in stereotyped ways.
- (iv) Care givers should be aware that the street child will require emotional freedom to ventilate his negative attitudes without fear of reprisal from the helper.
- (v) The helper must relate to the world of the street child instead of expecting him to relate to the world of the helper. This is necessary due to the limited experience and education of the street child.
- (vi) It is necessary to help the street child feel that he is better able to control his world.
- (vii) Establish a relationship of trust with the street child.

According to Hickson and Gaydon (1989 : 93) counsellors who subscribe to the above principles will be able to gain insight into the street child's world of meanings and values.

Alongside the growing street child problem in South Africa, counsellors will become increasingly important because of the role they can play in addressing the emotional needs of street children scarred by abuse and neglect. The efforts of counsellors should be able to heal street children. "Furthermore, guidance personnel in schools can play a preventative role in responding to children under stress before they decide to leave school and adopt the streets as their homes" (Hickson and Gaydon 1989 : 93).

7.7. A Proposed Comprehensive Intervention Programme for South Africa.



(Adapted from Schurink et al. 1993 : 244)

Explanation of the model.

7.7.1 Contact and Outreach

It is a common practice for South African NGO programmes to offer outreach services where 'street workers' go out to places frequented by street children. The intention of this is to form acquaintances with street children and invite them to participate in the programmes on offer.

Contact and outreach is an important aspect of any street child programme. In this country street outreach needs to be given more attention because many street coordinators do not have specialised skills in dealing with street children who may need to be treated with sensitivity and circumspection, especially where they have been abused and have lost trust in adults.

Outreach programmes need to be coordinated by specially trained personnel who will deal exclusively with children on the street. These street coordinators should attempt to make contact with street children who are normally suspicious of adults and assist them with their immediate needs if necessary, but the primary aim will be to embrace them into the assistance programme.

The outreach programme must not make the street more comfortable for street children because this will create the likelihood of them developing an aversion towards participation in the structured or formal intervention programmes. Consequently the street educator's role is to be perceived as a bridge between the street and a relevant programme that is intended to eventually improve the quality of life for every street child. In keeping with this the street educator is expected to establish contact that would ultimately lead to the street child's reintegration into society.

7.7.2 Immediate Care Programme

The immediate needs of street children are food, clothing, shelter and health care. Street children must be able to access immediate care independently or through the efforts of the street educator. The immediate care programme would offer street children food, shower facilities, clothing and even psychological assistance at drop-in centres manned by care workers.

These care workers will be supported by professionals such as doctors, psychologists, social workers and educators.

According to Keen (1990) in Schurink et al. (1993 : 245) as well as Richter (1988 : 54), street children display a need for psychological help. With this in mind it would be ideal to provide expert psychological assistance to street children who have been traumatised at this stage of intervention so that they may accept and adjust to the rehabilitation programme as soon as possible.

In South Africa, which is an extensive country with great distances between suburbs and poor transport networks, it would be an advantage if mobile education, health and feeding units are utilized. This would enable street educators to impress upon prospective recruits that immediate care only offers temporary solutions to their problem and more suitable programmes are available. The extended programmes would include intake, orientation and referral.

Immediate care should also incorporate social skills training in order to inculcate values such as self-discipline, use of leisure time, responsibility, honesty and other related aspects of social life such as rules of etiquette and good manners.

7.7.3 Intake and Assessment

Information about the street child is important and necessary in order for decisions to be made when admitting them into specific programmes. A common problem facing immediate assessment of street children during their initial days of contact with programmes is their high degree of instability. Furthermore, while there is a predominance of assessment techniques and instruments available for children in care there is a critical shortage of appraisal and assessment instruments in the case of street children (Schurink et al. 1993 : 246).

The assessment and appraisal should be done informally as well as formally to blend in with activities of the programme so that the child will find the assessment unobtrusive. In formal assessment the following aspects should be considered :

- (i) Identify strengths and weaknesses in the child (the ability to be honest, aptitude, experiences and skills and drug dependency).

- (ii) Perception of others by the street child (his view of adults, his parents and care workers).
- (iii) Perception of himself (self-concept).
- (iv) Ability to adhere to time schedules and structured programmes.
- (v) The child's level of consistency. That is, regular attendance to the shelter, sleep patterns and keeping track of belongings.
- (vi) The IQ of the child, however this should be treated with circumspection.
- (vii) The child's age and relevant level of development (physical and mental)
- (viii) Biographical information (family background, physical handicaps, level of education, problems encountered previously with police and parents, age at which the child left home, parents's details, place of origin and health status).

Care must be taken to ensure that the appraisal is performed in an amiable manner so that the street child will offer his cooperation readily and with integrity because in many instances street children had considered appraisal as prying into their private lives and became rebellious (Schurink et al. 1993 : 242).

In informal assessment one would rely on behavioural indicators such as the ability to resolve problems, the child's sense of freedom, level of verbal and physical competencies, level and quality of interaction with their peers and also their sexuality. Techniques such as interviews, questionnaires and tests would be utilized in formal appraisal.

7.7.4 Structured Intervention

Once the information of the child has been assimilated he/she should be included in designing an assistance programme to cater for his/her needs. The programme should be perceived by the street child as a vehicle to facilitate his /her desired transformation.

Programmes and services that could be developed to fulfil the street child's expectations would be both on horizontal and vertical continuums. In respect of the horizontal continuum programmes would be oriented towards preparation for a better life on the streets. The following sub-programmes would be used in the horizontal continuum : support services, informal education, child care services and health education.

Where the intervention is on a vertical continuum it would be oriented towards the preparation for a life after the street (Schurink et al. 1993 : 247). In this instance the child would pass through the full spectrum of sub-programmes such as : Child Care, Formal Education, Vocational Training and Support Services.

7.7.5 *Child Care Services*

The street child usually lacks normal familial contact and care. In designing appropriate child care service delivery, the emphasis should be placed on providing love, care, security and a safe environment. Accordingly care workers, social workers, psychologists and educators should all work towards rebuilding the trust lost in adults by providing consistent, stable and predictable relationships between adults and street children in addition to therapy. This would be more essential in children who are victims of abuse. This approach would help street children to overcome their maladjustment and place themselves on the road to rehabilitation.

7.7.6 *Education Programmes*

At present many assistance programmes in South Africa do run education programmes. The education programmes are usually remedial or formal (Schurink et al. 1993 : 250) and are conducted in conjunction with public and private schools. According to Schurink et al. (1993 : 250), many street children in these programmes eventually drop out. This implies that such an approach is not successful.

In the light of the above, education services must be offered within the assistance programme, by people whom the street child is familiar with and has come to trust. A relevant education programme should offer both informal and formal learning situations.

7.7.7 *Informal Education*

According to Schurink et al. (1993 : 251), studies indicate that most street children dropped out of school prior to leaving home. This suggests that many street children most probably leave school because of learning disabilities and emotional problems that they are subjected to at home. Where street children are subject to inadequate psychomotor development and emotional maladjustment then they should be exposed to informal education.

Informal education should be client based with focus on alleviating the child's learning problems while simultaneously seeking to redress the prejudice suffered by the child due to premature school leaving.

Informal education would comprise activities such as learning specialised skills, role playing, picture therapy, numeracy, literacy, health education, human values, sexuality and drug awareness.

Although it would be desirable to have a core syllabus the programme will not be curriculum bound but will be shaped by the learning needs of individual street children who are expected to progress at their own pace. Eventually the informal education programme must prepare the child for one of two streams. The first would be to prepare the child for assimilation into formal education and the second purpose would be to assist the child for a better life on the street, which has been categorised as horizontal development in respect of immediate needs.

The crucial fact to remember when developing educational programmes for street children is that not all the children will fit into formal education, therefore, informal education will always remain as a suitable alternative (Cockburn 1988 : 8-10).

7.7.8 Formal Education

If the ultimate aim of the assistance programme is the reintegration of the child into society then it will be necessary for the street child to enter mainstream education. Where it is intended that the street child benefits from formal education, then both the street child and mainstream education must be ready for each other. This implies that the street child's readiness to enter the formal education system must be established. Ideally it must be ascertained whether the child is willing to participate in formal education, whether the child is capable of conforming to the requirements of formal education and finally whether the child is capable of meeting the curricular requirements of formal education.

As far as the education system is concerned, educators need to be suitably qualified, experienced, aware of the needs of the street child and also capable of conversing in the indigenous language of the child if possible as this particular aspect tends to put the child at ease.

Initially the learning programme must be flexible and not strenuous on the child who is not accustomed to authority and extended periods of concentration. Initial flexible teaching methods, cognisance of the street child's socio-economic context (deprived), aptitudes and personal interests should be accorded priority in order to facilitate the settling in of the street child. Thereafter, the conditions can be modified, that is, there may be a gradual withdrawal of privileges which will allow the street child to blend into the formal education system.

7.7.9 Vocational Training

In many instances street children may already possess certain entrepreneurial skills which are used in their income generation activities. According to (Cockburn in Schurink et al. 1993 : 212), many street children are capable of constructing cheap commodities for sale. On South African streets it is not uncommon to see street children selling wooden toys, traditional weapons, beadwork and wire toys that they have personally manufactured. This activity should be encouraged in older street children because it would foster a sense of responsibility and entrench their desire for independence.

Furthermore, the support of the community should be enlisted by allowing older street children who possess certain technical skills and interests to enter into bridging apprentice 'contracts'. This should then permit access to formal training centres once a desirable level of competency has been acquired. This would have far reaching consequences for the street child . Some of these are :

- (i) Access to professional training is ensured.
- (ii) The specific needs and interests of the street child are addressed.
- (iii) The street child's economic circumstances are improved.
- (iv) The potential exploitation of street children by unscrupulous employers is addressed.
- (v) Employment opportunities for the street child are created.
- (vi) The brain drain in the form of lost talent is prevented.
- (vii) The vicious circle confronting the street child is broken. This means that the street child now has existing channels to improve his circumstances.

In some instances the assistance of NGO's and the Small Business Development Corporation could be enlisted to establish 'self-owned' businesses such as lawnmower repair services or garden services. These programmes would serve as incentives for the street child to seek reintegration.

7.7.10 Support Services - Recreation

In South Africa street children spend much time struggling to survive. This leaves little time for relaxation and leisure activities. Considering the fact that many street children abandoned their homes to escape mental anguish due to abuse, a 'pressurised' situation on the streets is certain to aggravate psychological maladjustment. In addition to the demands placed on their physical limitations, street children are also emotionally 'drained' (Richter 1988 : 54). Under these circumstances it is essential that street children be exposed to a programme of carefully planned recreation activities such as games, sport, painting and organised trips to places of interest. This would help to heal the scars inflicted on many of them.

7.7.11 Aftercare

Once street children have passed through the programme they must not assume that they have severed all ties with the organisation. They must be aware that they will continue to enjoy the support services of the programme that was responsible for their development and rehabilitation. For example, where a street child has been placed in foster care and experiences abuse or adjustment problems, such a child must be capable of returning to his former care workers with the conviction that he will receive their cooperation and the necessary assistance.

7.7.12 Evaluation

According to (Sauber in Schurink et al. 1993 : 255), evaluation must be regarded as a process of systematically judging the working, desirability, effectiveness or adequacy of something according to definite criteria. In the case of assistance programmes evaluation is desirable because it provides feedback in respect of the effectiveness of the programme. Evaluation would lead to awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. This knowledge should pave the way for reviews and reforms where necessary so that the projected aim of the programme is maintained.

7.7.13 Macro - Programmes

Macro-programmes would involve community awareness programmes which would be designed to harness community support at all levels. It is envisaged that where communities are made aware of the street child problem in their area they would realise the need to become involved in the relevant intervention programmes in their area. Community involvement is necessary in order to address the street child problem, especially in South Africa where community action has always been at the forefront in the development of intervention programmes. A good example of this situation is the action taken to assist street children by Mrs. Selley and her group of Rotarian Ladies in the north coast town of Umhlanga (refer to paragraph 2.6.2.4).

Macro-programmes should also target legislation and welfare strategies. In this instance one example is : *laws should be amended to allow dual custody of children in the event of divorce and cases where children are born out of wedlock.* Dual custody would have the effect of preserving the family unit despite the failure of the marriage. Furthermore, in the case where children are born out of wedlock dual custody would promote a family unit without marriage having to take place.

In the case of welfare policies there should be movement towards a child support benefit which is part of the state social security system. This benefit should be in the form of cash grants, made payable to poor families. These funds should be utilized towards assisting the child in meeting costs of education, food and clothing. The child support benefit should be accessible to all South African children and based on an objective measure of need. Recipients of this benefit should be given guidelines in the use of these funds and abuse by the parent or guardian should be discouraged by implementing monitoring procedures.

In addition the Social Welfare Policy should be broadbased. This implies that programmes should be implemented to create employment, provide adequate housing and address poverty. A macro-programme for social service delivery needs to be formulated by central government in consultation with academics, the relevant professionals and NGO's, in view of the fact that approximately fifty three percent of South Africans live below the thirty rand a month poverty line (Natal Mercury 1997 : 1). This should culminate in sub-programmes such as low cost housing and community development, nutritional programmes and child support benefits.

Finally it would be ideal to provide support to all levels of South African society such that health care, education and housing would become affordable and accessible to every one so that socio-economic standards can be improved. This would help to preserve the family structure and enable parents to concentrate on using the stable family foundation to assist their children to develop skills, values and attitudes that will contribute towards their personal prosperity and eventually the prosperity of the South African nation with the intention of dissipating the street child problem.

7.8 Implications for Further Research

The common ground for many assistance programmes is to view the street child from society's perspective. From this view the street child is immediately perceived as disadvantaged and in need of rehabilitation. This could result in sending them to institutions without prior planning. Consequently such efforts may be meaningless when street children run away at the first opportunity that arises. At the heart of such failure lies the complete misunderstanding of the street child. This amounts to an ignorance of the fact that these street children have struggled to attain a sense of freedom that is often accompanied by assumed adulthood. Many street children have attained certain levels of competence due to their experiences on the streets such that these capabilities ensure their survival. In the view of Hanssen (1996 : 258), these attitudes and strengths of the street child must be harnessed to intervention programmes instead of adopting programmes that have evolved from the preconception that streetlife has only negative influences on children.

Under these circumstances it is imperative that continuous research is conducted in aspects relating to the street child problem, especially in South Africa where it is relatively new. This would ensure that a balanced perception of the street child problem exists. Perhaps this would assist immensely in the search for solutions to the street child problem in this country.

7.8.1 Research into Views Concerning Physical Development of Street Children.

An immediate hazard facing street children is the risk to their physical development. The exposure to cold, damp, insufficient clothing, criminal elements, drug abuse and the high risks of contracting sexually transmitted diseases could threaten the very survival of the street child (Donald and Swart-Kruger 1994 : 170). Many experts such as (Richter 1990, Swart 1990, Gebers 1990) as cited by Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994 : 171), agree that in terms of physical development street children are indeed vulnerable to a range of severe risks. However, according to Apteker (1991 : 328), street children are able to function well on the streets contrary to public opinion. This sentiment is endorsed by McNeill (1996 : 16) where she indicates that street children develop problem solving and survival techniques that help them cope with street life. Although similar tendencies are apparent in South Africa, Richter (1991 : 5-7) states that where the street child develops coping strategies and may appear to have adapted to his harsh living conditions the reality is that the real risks to physical development are long term and are always latent. Consequently it would be vital to conduct longitudinal studies in respect of street children in order to explore the relationship between time spent on the streets and the relative effect on physical development.

7.8.2 Research into Aspects Relating to Emotional Development of Street Children.

Street children face a strong possibility of developing emotional problems due to the lack of an adequate relationship with an adult caregiver (Donald and Swart-Kruger 1994 : 171). This view is supported by Bowlby (1988 : 36), who states that a lack of emotional security, trust and psychological nurturance has profound implications on the street child's development.

In her study in South Africa, Richter (1988 : 54) found evidence to support the theory that the negative experiences of street children does impact negatively on their emotional stability. Under these circumstances it is necessary to conduct research into aspects such as the emotional state, emotional development and emotional problems of street children in South Africa.

The researcher's opinion is that the emotional status of the child plays a significant role during the phase where the child gravitates to street life as well as the phase where the street child progresses towards successful rehabilitation. Therefore, explorations into the emotional circumstances of street children would yield interesting information which could assist educators, street co-ordinators and social workers to :

- (i) Understand the behaviour of street children .
- (ii) Interact with greater flexibility and confidence when dealing with street children.
- (iii) Appreciate the attempts, failures, victories, hopes, fears and shortcomings of the street child.
- (iv) Have realistic expectations of the street child and his endeavours.

What is of significance is that a greater understanding of the street child's emotional circumstances is necessary because the knowledge derived from such an exercise would help towards understanding factors within the child that propagate the street child problem. This knowledge would prove invaluable in the quest for solutions to the street child problem.

7.8.3 Further Research in Education Programmes

The central theme of this study is to work towards solutions in an attempt towards addressing the street child problem in South Africa. At the inception of this study the researcher suggested that one possible cause of the street child problem could be the child's disillusion with mainstream education. This situation arises where the child experiences rejection due to poor performance (as well as other reasons) and consequently chooses to drop out of school. Where such children are allowed to reinforce negative attitudes towards school and education by virtue of street life then both the community and education would have failed the child. However, if the child is reintroduced to innovative learning strategies tailored to suit the child's aptitude and abilities within a supportive, stimulating and secure environment based on love and trust then the child is certain to rediscover not only education but the human virtues of love and a sense of belonging.

An appropriate educational programme geared towards addressing the needs of street children should adopt a holistic and supportive approach towards the child. Children who are abandoned, rejected and neglected would then be given an opportunity not only to re-establish their feelings of self-worth, identity and sense of belonging but will also be allowed to rediscover the novelty of learning as a joyful and rewarding experience.

It is interactive community projects such as this that possess the potential to dispel the child's disillusion with education and capable of replacing it with hope. In South Africa the possibilities of implementing projects that embody basic human values should be explored because these projects would be simple yet offer a creative and flexible attempt at addressing the educational needs of street children in an African context.

7.8.4 Concluding Remarks

Presently South Africa is experiencing transformation which is accompanied by negative trends such as : economic difficulties, high taxation of the middle class, high levels of corruption in the public sector, a high crime rate, and the imminent collapse of public services such as education and health care.

The preceding circumstances impact negatively on the quality of life, especially where the country is a developing one. Furthermore, in South Africa approximately eighty five percent of the population is disadvantaged while about fifteen percent are productive (Gildenhuys 1997 : 398-400). If there is any attempt to improve the living standards of the large proportion of disadvantaged South Africans then the cost will eventually be borne by the small percentage of taxpayers. The present day government is promoting social reform aggressively with its RDP programme (reconstruction and development programme), in the hope of achieving a better quality of life for the previously disadvantaged. In an attempt to achieve their objective there has to be government intervention in the economic and social domain of community life which should be characterised by some of the following policies : government regulation of interest rates, renewed emphasis on civil rights and freedom, rejection of accumulation of private wealth and the elimination of overconcentration of economic power in the hands of a few (Gildenhuys 1997: 11).

Contemporary government measures have precipitated harsh economic conditions for the average South African and has failed to address a pertinent problem such as the development of the nation's human resources, which would result in a highly skilled community that has the potential to contribute to South Africa's prosperity. Economic growth would then be stimulated and foreign investment would be attracted leading to low unemployment levels. These conditions are certain to reduce crime and poverty thereby causing a possible reduction in the street child problem. This scenario implies that in the search for solutions to the street child problem every avenue of South African society should be exploited proactively.

7.9 Synthesis and Evaluation of the Study

In this study an attempt was made to grasp the realities of the street child problem in South Africa in a search for possible solutions. It became clear that there are no easy answers as to why youth live on the streets. There may be instances where poverty and adversity in the home will cause a split in some families yet strengthen the bonds in others. Life on the streets may be uncomfortable and hazardous, however, it also offers children an opportunity to escape an untenable life at home.

Street children take on the responsibilities associated with adulthood such as finding shelter, food and clothing. In their struggle for survival these children will sleep under bridges, in abandoned cars, in vacant properties, in alleys and derelict buildings. They commonly sleep in groups primarily for safety and warmth. Income generation activities could take the form of thieving, begging, hawking and offering services. These services could range from car washing to sexual favours.

Street children in South Africa, are visible and their numbers are on the increase. The community response is varied. Some are resentful, others are concerned and many feel compassion. It takes a considerable amount of resources from the community to address the street child problem even in 'small measure'.

South African society displays complex socio-economic stratification, multiculturalism and unprecedented change caused by democratisation. Under these circumstances, communities which were once insulated against negative socio-economic trends have now become vulnerable. Generally these dynamics are an inherent characteristic of any society because no society is static.

Against this background there will always be a need to explore society, its components and dynamics. The purpose of this study was not restricted to an exploration but was extended into a search for solutions to the street child problem in this country. The existence of such a problem in a modern, civilized and technologically advanced society where concepts such as 'democracy' and 'human rights' are being firmly entrenched is not only a social contradiction but also a human tragedy.

In the search for solutions to the street child problem this study also attempts to consider the lifeworld of the street child. This was discovered as being 'marginalised yet rich in experience', 'hazardous yet fulfilling' and 'characterised by freedom yet demanding a sense of self-responsibility' (assumed adulthood). These conditions are a constant reminder that street life is a complex culture and cannot be approached simplistically. This meant that it was vital to understand the dynamics of street life, the reason why it appealed to children and what needs it satisfied in the child. Consequently this approach paved the way towards a balanced perception of the street child problem.

Ultimately the study revealed that attempts at addressing the street child problem in South Africa remained community initiatives. Clearly this is an unacceptable situation because these initiatives always had to be extended but were restricted in their expansion due to a lack of resources. In this regard there has been a unified call on the government to take cognisance of its present stance of non-involvement. This is a legitimate request because government has a responsibility to address the needs of its citizens and addressing the street child problem should be regarded as a priority by any responsible government, especially for a developing nation and fledgling democracy such as South Africa.

ADDENDUM A

THE STREET CHILD IN THE MEDIA

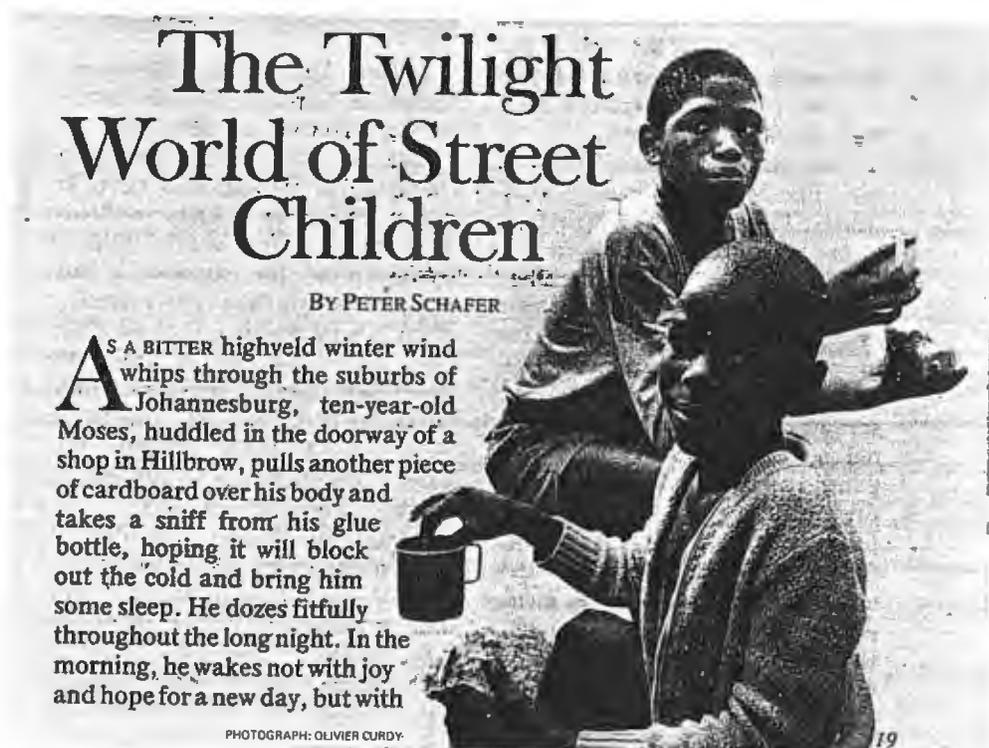
Coverage of the Street Child Problem in the Print Media of South Africa

Introduction

South Africa has numerous newspapers that enjoy excellent circulation. These newspapers form part of the country's well structured mainstream media. A large number of South Africans have come to rely on the print media as a source of reliable information. The street child problem is not only current in nature, but is also tangible and on the increase. Against this background it was considered as an appropriate and interesting exercise to explore the nature of coverage enjoyed by the street child problem in South African print media.

The following articles and reports were chosen from numerous newspapers and magazines :

1. This article covers the circumstances, population, etiology and assistance programmes in respect of street children.



(Reader's Digest 1989 : 19)

2. This article is informative in nature and provides information about the Themba Club which is a street child committee operating in the coastal resort town of Margate in Kwazulu-Natal

New haven opens for Margate street children

With the support of the Margate TLC, the Themba Club has opened a new community centre in town.

THERE was great excitement last week when the Themba Club moved into its new premises in Margate.

The Themba Club, which rehabilitates street children, plans to use the house as a half-way centre and a drop-in shelter.

Themba has established a permanent home at Munster where, for the past 18 months, 14 boys have been living. The children all attend the nearby Tongasi School.

"The problem is that the rehabilitation process must be gradual," explained chairman Trish Garlick. "If we take the boys straight from the streets to the Munster shelter, they will be back on the streets by nightfall."

"They would also have an unsettling effect on the

boys living at the home. Therefore a half-way house in town is a vital stepping stone."

Mrs Garlick said the Margate TLC had been very supportive.

"The TLC has undertaken to pay the house's rent, realising the negative influence the children begging on the streets have on the town's image," said committee member Mr Lynton Brauteseth.

Senior child care worker Chris Biyela is presently visiting schools and community leaders in the Gamalakhe region from where most of the children originate.

"If we work in conjunction with the community, we can reach the children immediately when they start playing truant from

school. In most cases, parents are not aware that their children are not attending school. By reaching the children with problems before they head for the streets, we can short-circuit the process," said Mr Biyela.

The new Themba Club house, which is located behind the Margate Police Station, will also be used as a community centre where adult literacy and education programmes will be run.

"By raising the skills levels of parents, we will better equip them to care and provide for their families," said Mr Brauteseth.

During the next few weeks, Mr Biyela will visit businesses and industries in and around Margate to discuss the pro-



Halfway house: Members of the Themba Club committee (from left) Julie Aitchison, Naomi Noyons, Rosemary Muir, Lynton Brauteseth, Hazel Parry, Chris Biyela, Doreen Alley and Jason-Lee Nell, outside the new Themba Club community centre.

gramme.

"A team from the Natal Adult Basic Education Support Association (Nasa) will conduct a needs analysis for us, early in August," said Mr Brauteseth.

"We will then be able to set up the programmes

which are most needed. We are very excited about the possibilities this new phase opens up. We encourage everyone to become involved in whatever way they can."

Presently the house is almost empty. The club

needs anything and everything which would turn it into a home. If you have any furniture, kitchen equipment, bedding to spare or would like to become involved, phone Mr Brauteseth 083 301 5576 or Naomi Noyons (03931) 50778.

The club thanks the many people who have supported it in the past. Parishioners of the Margate Anglican Church and the Norwegian Settlers' Church have always been very supportive, as have many local businesses.

3. In this report the response of a concerned community member is described.

Shane's mission to help street children



Shane Pillay feeds his street children

By Charmaine Pillay

WHEN Durban radio technician Shane Pillay saw a homeless child begging on the street one rainy day last year, he decided it was time someone did something to help the street children.

And being the person he is, he decided that the someone should be him. Within weeks, Mr Pillay 25, of Randles Road, Sydenham, had set up Children In Distress.

With the help of two friends, Latif Essa and Danny Gopal, he began fund-raising to clothe and feed some of Durban's homeless children.

"I was in church one Sunday when the priest said we all have the ability to do something for the less fortunate. At that stage I couldn't think of what I could do. But one day in June I stopped my car at a set of traffic lights, and saw this little boy standing in the rain. He had no shoes and was wearing shorts and a jersey. That was when I

realised I was going to help."

Now his greatest wish is to open a shelter to house about 1 000 street children. He has written to President Nelson Mandela requesting an audience with him and is hoping his efforts to get a government-sponsored piece of land will be successful.

"If I had the land I'd be able to put up the shelter immediately. You can clothe and feed children but if they don't have a home, they are bound to get into all sorts of trouble. I'm hoping to put up the shelter by the end of the year."

Mr Pillay said although there were other organisations which deal with street children, most expected the children to adapt to normal social standards.

"Instead of trying to get these children to conform, I believe we should acknowledge the skills they have and nurture them. They have already undergone so many changes, I don't think they need any more."

Although he acknowledges it will not be easy to persuade the children to stay in the shelter, he believes that in time they will learn to trust again.

"These children are hurting and afraid. When you hold out a helping hand they usually hold back. A lot of them congregate at the Workshop complex and the first time we tried feeding them, they all ran away."

Although the children are currently fed only about once a month, Mr Pillay would like to see this become a daily chore.

Although Mr Pillay is a full-time employee of the Natal Ambulance Service, he devotes much of his spare time to the children.

His wife Michelle, 23, a laboratory technician, has no problem with that. In fact she is on the 10-person committee which assists in running the organisation.

They have a six-month old son, Tevin.

(Post Natal 1996 : 9)

4. This report provides the reader with insight into the nature of the street child problem and raises the question of working towards solutions.

Umhlanga woman's love for children is a costly business

She's 'Ma' to 62 streetkids

An Umhlanga woman has taken streetchildren into her heart, writes Daily News Reporter BARBARA COLE.

A KIND-HEARTED local woman, hailed by some as the "Mother Teresa of Umhlanga", has a soft spot for homeless streetchildren - all 62 of them!

Award-winning Gina Selley admits that she can't pass a homeless streetchild without offering help and support.

She picks them up in Umhlanga where they beg for money, finds them homes and shelter, then gets them an education. She feeds and clothes all 62 street children she has "adopted", kits them out in school uniforms and pays to transport them to and from school.

And apart from three R100 donations every month, she meets all the costs herself.

"She's an amazing woman," said admiral Karin van Dongen, chairwoman of the Ladies of Umhlanga Round Table, which has decided to give Mrs Selley some practical help.

Mrs Selley - known to her children as Ma or Gina - admits that helping streetchildren lead a normal life costs her a lot.

"I don't even want to think about it. But I just love children. Some of them have no families and have run away from violence," she said.

Generous Gina has spent the last two years picking up streetchildren and placing them



at Umhlanga Police Station who children in need can be taken to the police or "any car: individual"

The caravan has been refurbished with R9 000 from a recent fundraising event held by Round Table women. It has been painted in bright colours and terms by pupils from North Girls' High.

"We didn't just want to take money, so we asked Mrs Selley how we could help her," said Karin van Dongen.

A social worker, Elda Ndlovu, whose salary will be met by Selley - will be on duty at the reception centre, to provide much-needed counselling and assess the children.

"She will take their photographs, find out their backgrounds, reunite them with their families where possible, or direct them to suitable shelters and education," said Mrs Van Dongen.

The Round Table women have provided the social worker with a computer and Mrs Ndlovu is being given computer training.

"We see this reception centre as the start of a more structured solution to the ever-growing problem of children living on the streets," said Mrs Van Dongen.

"We owe it to ourselves to provide these children in need with a more meaningful existence off the streets that they have a chance to become productive members of society."

"If neglected, the chances high they will turn to crime and survive."

GENEROUS GINA: Former streetchildren make a fuss of Gina Selley, centre, their adopted "mother" who has given them a new life. Social worker Elda Ndlovu is behind Mrs Selley, and Karin van Dongen of the Ladies of Umhlanga Round Table, is on the right.

in local shelters. Many live in the Mariannahill Streetwise Home and 11 of them at The Ark in Durban. The rest are fostered out with seven foster mothers.

Mrs Selley even pays the foster

mothers for their services - then sends them food parcels.

It costs her R1 200 a month just to transport The Ark children to their school in Mount Edgecombe. "Some are 18 to 20 years old and

are in standard five, but at least now they are going to school," she said.

Mrs Selley has been recognised for her work with streetchildren and was named the Rotary Club of

North Durban's Citizen of the Year last year. She has also been awarded Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Bridge Builder's Medal.

A reception centre - a converted caravan - has just been opened

5. This article the question of financing intervention programmes for street children is raised. In this instance the author gives expression to feelings of frustration at having to be overtaxed in order to subsidise the disadvantaged.

Why should we care?

From **TONY BALL**
Durban

AS an already cashless, overtaxed businessman who sees his hard-earned taxes squandered by an over-spending Government, I had to chuckle when I read Mr Bhengu's pleas for assistance for street children.

Mr Bhengu, perhaps you can tell me why I must be responsible for these kids when their own parents do not give a damn. If I am going to subsidise children it will be first my own and then those of my staff.

On February 19 Mr Mark Shephard from Pinetown "adopted" Allen Nzuzza, a street child, by first introducing him to power-boat racing with promises of taking him into his home. Can anyone tell me how Allen has fitted in?



STREET CHILDREN: Why should we care, asks a reader

Watching the attitude of the various race groups when they are accosted by street kids at robots is extremely interesting.

6. This report highlights the alleged criminal activity of street children in Durban's Point Road.

FAGINS AT WORK

POLICE investigations of a pick-pocketing and robbery crime wave in Durban's Point Road area have revealed that sinister masterminds are teaching street children the finer points of mugging and armed assault, and the workings of the legal system.

Inspector Ashley Deepraj, head of Point Road police station's anti-robbery unit, suspects that children with cellphones in high-rise beach-front buildings are identifying potential targets for their colleagues on the streets. They target oriental sailors, who usually carry dollars and are unlikely to appear in court because they don't stay in the country.

"Someone has taught that to these children," says Inspector Deepraj. "When they mug a person, they now operate with precision." And when the children are arrested, their knowledge of the legal system is greater than they could've gained from many brushes with the law.

- Paul Kirk in *Saturday Argus*, Cape Town

7. In this article the hazards of street-life is depicted, where an alleged battle among street children resulted in deaths.

Six die in street kids 'war'

By MORGAN NAIDU

GANG warfare among street children has left six youngsters dead on Durban's beachfront in the past two weeks.

This latest chapter in the street children saga was disclosed at a meeting this week between concerned business and welfare representatives and provincial Tourism Minister Jacob Zuma.

Mr Zuma said a "fundamental approach that will eradicate this problem" was needed.

According to members of the beachfront business committee, the deaths of the six children were possibly linked to a territorial battle. Two of the deaths occurred near a beachfront hotel after the children had an argument over whose "area" it was.

The committee said the problem was further complicated by "Fagan-like masters who use the street children to sell stolen goods".

Chairman Eggie Naidu said some mothers left their children on the beachfront late at night to go begging, often leading to friction with the actual street children.

"We have children who come here because they are victims of family upheavals or township violence and, as a result, there is often rivalry."

Mr Zuma agreed to look at a proposal by the Street Children's Forum. However, he said short term solutions would have to be put in place.

"If we don't get rid of this, then we are nursing something that is negatively impacting on our economy and tourism."

8. This report explores amendments to legislation that are designed to prevent street children who commit crimes, escape the legal net.

NEW POWERS TO DEAL WITH STREET URCHINS

Law gets tough on children

By LEANNE SEELIGER

POLICE and magistrates have been given new teeth to clamp down on the problem of street children and crime on the Durban beachfront - in a move which has been widely welcomed by the Durban tourism industry.

This follows a presidential amendment to the Correctional Services Act which allows police to detain people under 18 years for 24 hours in a police cell if they are likely to escape from a place of safety or harm anyone in such an institution.

Police have arrested 70 juveniles for crimes ranging from house-breaking to armed robbery since the amendment was gazetted on May 10.

"Durban beachfront will once again be a safe place to walk," said KZN Hospitality Association acting chairman Robert Mauris. "These children will no longer be able to laugh in the face of the law."

Durban central sub-structure

mayor Johannes Mile also welcomed the new Act, claiming it "was a step in the right direction to ensure the safety of tourists".

Metro mayor Siphso Ngwenya said those who committed crimes had to pay for them. He said, however, the new Act needed to be accompanied with a focus on rehabilitation to help those who could be helped.

Greater Durban Marketing Authority chief executive officer Geoff Austin said Durban's international tourism image had suffered greatly from incidents of crime on the beachfront.

The new teeth of the police would go a long way to rectify this.

South African Police Services Senior Supt Roderick Winter said that in the past juveniles had no sooner been arrested for crimes than they were out on the streets again.

Juveniles, he said, were now being detained in separate police cells and were not being mixed up with adults.

The presidential Act also em-

powers magistrates to send juveniles to prison while awaiting trial if the child is likely to break out of a place of safety or harm someone at the institution.

A women's detention cell at Westville prison has been converted into a detention cell for juveniles, Supt Winter said.

However, not everyone was in favour of the new Act.

Children Right Ministry's director, the Rev Livingstone Jacob, said it exposed children to possible abuse.

He said there was no way police detention could be effectively monitored to ensure that juveniles were not mixed up with adults.

Durban Child Welfare director André Kalis said: "Children should not be detained in prisons as the negative influence of hardened criminals can't be conducive to rehabilitation to become productive citizens."

The presidential Act is effective for a year, after which it can be extended for another year by parliament.

9. Street children require an income in order to survive. Their desperate circumstances allow unscrupulous adults to use them in criminal activities ranging from pick-pocketing, bag-snatching and mugging to burglary. In this report, the reader is advised to beware of a category of street children in Durban, who, are described as 'child gangsters'.

Eight-year-olds turning to crime

Baby-face gangsters arrested

Don't be fooled by their baby faces - child gangsters are often armed and dangerous, writes Chief Reporter KETH ROSS.

A GANG of professional housebreakers - aged 11 to 14 - has been captured by the City Police, providing further evidence of the growing sophistication of the "kiddie" criminals of Durban.

The City Police are deeply concerned about the obvious increase in the number and scope of the criminal gangs of children operating lately.

"The children have also started operating in a much wider area," said a spokesman for the City Police. Chief Inspector Henric van der Merwe.

"It is no longer just the beachfront that has a problem with gangs of young criminals. The gangs are now operating throughout the city."

Insp van der Merwe said the gang of youngsters most recently arrested had been caught after they had broken into a house in Durban North.

"We got a telephone call that there was a housebreaking in progress in Burns Crescent and policemen from our dog unit went there," he said.

When they arrived four chil-

dren leapt from a window, carrying a bag containing jewellery, watches and other valuables. The children fled and clambered over a garden wall. The police chased them and in a neighbouring garden a shot was fired, wounding one of the suspects in the leg.

Police dog Frankie was then released by his handler, Constable Mike Naylor, and a second suspect was brought to the ground and arrested.

The two remaining suspects fled into Saville Place where they were tackled by police dog Spencer and arrested by his handler, Const Wayne Hammond.

All four of the suspects received medical treatment, one for a bullet wound and the other three for dog bites.

Insp van der Merwe said: "The children told us they came from Chesterville. But they have probably been living on the streets for a long time."

Three of the children were 14 and the other 11. "The 11-year-old is small and was probably taken along to climb through fanlights and other narrow openings. He is very much a child. He was very frightened when we caught him. But what future has he got?"

"He will probably be a hardened criminal by the time he is 14. Children as young as eight

are getting involved in crime."

Insp van der Merwe said the house in Durban North had been thoroughly ransacked.

"They were obviously disturbed by the City Police. They had a lot of clothes and other goods packed and ready to go."

It was clear the children had been prepared and equipped for housebreaking in a very "professional" way. "They were carrying bolt cutters and other housebreaking tools."

He suspected the children had been helped by an older person. "There is often an adult with a vehicle involved with these young gangs. The adult drops them off and collects them - and their stolen goods."

Insp van der Merwe said many of the gangs in Durban were less organised.

"They often move about the city - usually in those areas where there is a lot of activity - until they spot an opportunity to take something of value. Then they go for it."

Such gangs committed a variety of crimes - from pickpocketing and bag-snatching to common theft and mugging.

"The gang members - even some of the small children - are often armed and dangerous. We have strong evidence that a recent murder on the beachfront was committed by a 14-year-old boy."

(Daily News 1998 : 1)

10. Economic hardship is one of the main reasons why children gravitate onto streets. According to this report, the Indian community, which once considered the protection and safety of children a priority, is now forced to turn their children into prostitutes in order to survive. One expert feels that policies at government level are compromising the sexual safety of children and removing the child prostitutes from their families, or, prosecuting parents are not solutions to this problem.



CRIMINAL : Girls as young as 10 are often seen soliciting in Chatsworth in an upsurge of the “baby flesh trade”. The recent uncovering of a prostitution ring involving minors has highlighted the increasing problem of child prostitution.

(Sunday Tribune 1998 : 4)

11. In many instances the police claim that they do not harass so witch-hunt street children. The contents of this article, is contrary to such claims. According to "Street kids locked up for NAM", street children claim to have been harassed and forcibly removed by police who deny these allegations.

Police harassed us, say children

Street kids locked up for NAM

To the street children desperately trying to eke out a living in the dark corners of Durban, the Non-Aligned Movement summit - hailed as a big success - brought only misery and hardship, writes Daily News Reporter BHEKO KA MADLALA.

STREET children in Durban claim the week-long Non-Aligned Movement conference turned them into fugitives as they hid from police determined to clear them from the streets.

They claim police and city officials had "gone all out" to harass and remove them from the streets, because they would be seen as a "public eyesore" to the international delegates who converged on the International Convention Centre a week ago.

Some street children said they were snatched from the pavements by the police and bundled away to the far-flung outskirts of the city; others claim they were locked in a place of safety centre in Alice Street.

A City Police spokesman has denied that children had been taken out of the city.

But Nkululeko Zondi (10) insists he was bundled out of the city and dumped on the remote outskirts of Stanger, way

up the North Coast. "I was walking with my friends in Grey Street when a cream van suddenly stopped and the driver and his colleagues ordered us to get inside. They forcefully loaded us inside the van.

"Some of my friends escaped, but I and my other friend were caught," he recalled.

Ntuthuko also claimed he was removed from the Grey Street pavement, his "street home", by people in the same cream van and dumped in Stanger.

"They drove us all the way to Stanger where they dumped us and left us stranded, but we came back to Durban two days later," he said.

Another victim of the police clean-up during the summit was Khumbulani Msomi (10). He claimed that before and during the conference police had gone on a witch-hunt to harass and remove street children.

"We were taken to the a place of safety near Alice Street where we were locked in and kept inside," he said.

Ntuthuko said that during the conference "street" children were turned into fugitives as they were harassed "on sight" by the police.

"Whenever they saw us they chased us and caught us and harassed us. They released some of the lucky ones, or dumped us far away outside

the city," he said. During the conference he and his friends turned a bush near Greyville racecourse into a temporary hiding place.

KwaZulu-Natal deputy director of the Child Line, Ms Ubashany Naidoo, said it had become a trend that if there was a big occasion in Durban, street children were taken away from the city.

"During the Rugby World Cup similar incidents are said to have happened. Street children also claimed that during the cup matches in 1995 they were taken away and brought back after they had finished," she said.

She said it was unfair and very disruptive to the lives of the children already traumatised by the hardship of street life. "Street kids are the reality of this province. Foreigners need to be exposed to the realities of this province."

Inspector Vincent Ngubane, spokesman for the Durban City Police, said SAPS and City Police had taken children to various shelters in Durban, but never out of town.

"City Police have never dumped children outside the city," he said. "The City Police are involved in an ongoing programme to assist children to find their parents and to place them in homes. During NAM, this process was intensified," he said.

(Daily News 1998 : 1)

Concluding Remarks

The mainstream print media in South Africa has given adequate coverage of the street child problem. Media attention has been focused on aspects such as :

- * community response to the street child problem.
- * the criminal activity of street children.
- * legislation affecting street children.
- * causes of the street child problem.
- * hazards facing street children.
- * intervention programmes aimed at assisting street children.

It seems that the majority of the reports in the print media are aimed at informing the community about the street child problem, in the hope that people would appreciate the magnitude of the problem such that they would make the necessary attempts to help address the problem.

While the mainstream printed media has taken the opportunity to focus attention on the street child problem in South Africa, the 'popular press' which produces numerous magazines has chosen to ignore this issue, except for Reader's Digest. This is unusual on account of the fact that South Africans generally enjoy reading magazines and the street child problem is a topical issue. It would be an advantage if these 'glossy magazines' also focused attention on the street child problem, because their journalistic approach may assist towards presenting a more comprehensive report on the street child phenomenon.

ADDENDUM : B

SURVEY RESEARCH

(applied in the community of Port Shepstone)

1. Name :
2. Age :
3. Population Group :
4. Occupation :
5. Whom do you consider to be a street child?
6. Do you think that there are street children in Port Shepstone? (Y/N).....
- 6.1 If yes how did you become aware of them
- 6.2 Can you estimate the number present
7. Describe your feelings towards street children?
- Choose your answer from the undermentioned categories :
- 7.1 Resentful
- 7.2 Compassion
- 7.3 Guilt
- 7.4 Indifferent
- 7.5 Other (explain)
- 8.1 Do you consider them a problem ? Y/N
- 8.2 What are some of the problems that they may present to :-
 - (a) Port Shepstone:
 - (b) the public :
 - (c) to you :
9. What do you think are the causes of this problem in Port Shepstone?
.....
10. List some solutions to curb the problem.....
.....

11. Who do you think is most capable of curbing the problem of street children :-

- 11.1 National Government
- 11.2 Provincial Government
- 11.3 Local Authority
- 11.4 The Child Welfare
- 11.5 Church/Temples/Mosques
- 11.6 Volunteers
- 11.7 Private Companies
- 11.8 Parents
- 11.9 Community Organizations
- 11.10 Other

12. Do you think that any organization exists in Port Shepstone that furthers the interest of street children? Y/N

12.1 If yes name the organization

13.1 Do you think that the street child problem will increase or decrease in the future. Y/N

13.2 Give a reason for your answer

.....

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS PRESENTED BY MR K. ANIRUDHRA IN RESPECT OF THE MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE BEING PROMOTED BY DR E. PRINSLOO AT UNISA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

ADDENDUM : C

SURVEY RESEARCH

QUESTIONNAIRE

(administered to street children)

1. What is your name?.....
2. Where do you come from?.....
3. How old are you now?.....
4. What was the occupation of
 - 4.1 your father?.....
 - 4.2 your mother?.....
5. How many were you at home?.....
- 6.1 What number are you?.....
- 6.2 Why did you leave home?.....
.....
- 6.3 At what age did you leave home?.....
- 7.1 Did you attend school? Y/N
- 7.2 If yes until what std?
- 7.3 Why did you leave school?.....
.....
- 7.4 Would you like to go back to school? Y/N
- 7.5 Give a reason for your answer in 7.4
8. What were some of the things that you did after you left school?.....
.....
.....
- 8.1 How did you support yourself after leaving school?.....
.....
- 8.2 Who were your friends?.....

- 8.3 Where did you live after leaving school?.....
.....
- 8.4 Were you happy with your life on the street? Y/N
- 8.5 Do you miss home? Y/N.....
- 8.6 Give a reason for your answer in 8.5.....
.....
9. Did you ever get into trouble with the police? Y/N.....
- 9.1 If answer in 9 is yes, explain.....
.....
- 9.2 How did the police treat you?.....
.....
- 9.3 Do you think that you would get into similar trouble again? Y/N.....
- 9.4 Did you learn anything when you were in the streets?Y/N.....
- 9.4.1 List some of the things which you learnt.....
.....
.....
- 9.4.2 Who taught you these things?.....
.....
- 9.4.3 Do you consider these things useful?Y/N.....
- 9.4.4 Explain why?.....
10. Have you seen other children or met with such children, that is ordinary children? Y/N.....
- 10.1 Do you consider them more fortunate than yourself? Y/N.....
- 10.1.1 Give reasons.....
.....
.....
- 10.1.2 Would you like to be in their position? Y/N.....
- 10.1.3 Give a reason.....
.....

11. Are you pleased with the home which has been provided for you? Y/N.....
- 11.1 Give reasons for your response.....
.....
12. Do you like the street coordinator? Y/N
- 12.1 Give a reason.....
.....
13. Would you consider leaving the shelter on your own accord? Y/N.....
- 13.1 Give reasons why?.....
.....
- 13.2 Why have some of your friends left?.....
.....
- 13.2.1 What is your opinion of their decision to leave?.....
.....
- 13.3 Do you think that you will be here forever?Y/N.....
- 13.3.1 Explain why.....
.....
- 13.4 What are you going to do when you leave this place?.....
.....
- 13.5 What contributions do you make towards this home?.....
.....
- 13.5.1 How do you earn this amount of money?.....
.....
- 14 Do you beg for money / goods? Y/N.....
- 14.1 What is your opinion of
- 14.1.1 beggars?
- 14.1.2 begging?
15. Do you have any plans for yourself? Y/N

- 15.1 What are they?
-
- 15.1.2 Do you consider them attainable?
- 16. Who is your President?
- 16.1 What do you think of him?
- 16.2 Do you think that he can help you? Y/N
- 16.2.1 How?
- 17. How many times did you fall ill?
- 17.1 What did you do?
- 17.2 Have you been attended to by the following?
- 17.2.1 A doctor
- 17.2.2 A nurse
- 17.2.3 Hospital staff
- 18 Can you read? Y/N
- 18.1 Can you write? Y/N
- 19. Do you think that you will go back to ? [use the code Y/ N]
- 19.1.1 your home
- 19.1.2 your school
- 19.1.3 Give a reason for your answer in :
- 19.1.1
- 19.1.2
- 20 What are some of the most serious dangers of life on the streets?.....
-
-
-

21. Is there anything which you wish to say such as a message for children on the streets?.....
.....

**THIS SPACE MAY BE USED FOR INSERTING ANY INFORMATION WHICH
COULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN EACH CASE
WRITE DOWN THE QUESTION NUMBER AND THE RELEVANT
INFORMATION NEXT TO IT.**

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Date Completed : **By :**

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