

TOPIC:

**TO INVESTIGATE FACTORS
CONTRIBUTING TO STREET CHILDREN, A
CASE STUDY OF MERU MUNICIPALITY,
MERU CENTRAL DISTRICT, KENYA.**

BY

786

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN
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DECLARATION

I Ms Muguongo Judy Gatwiri, declare that this research report is my own initiative done to the best of my knowledge and has never been submitted for the award of degree ,diploma in any other institution.

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The research report has been submitted for examination with my knowledge as the supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my loving parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Muguongo and to my sister Mercy, my brothers, Eric, James and Evans for your love and support during the entire period.

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To successfully carry out this study the list of whom I am indebted to for their assistance is long and worthy.

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ABSTRACT

The research is aimed at investigating the factors contributing to the street children problem. Case study of Meru municipality Meru Central district, Eastern Province, Kenya. The major variables of the study are poverty, child neglect and peer pressure.

This study was aimed at investigating the factors contributing to the street children phenomenon. It was carried out in Meru municipality Meru central district of eastern province of Kenya. The variables examined were poverty, child neglect, and peer group influence.

The background to the study traces the onset of the problem to the late 1960's. The problem is clearly stated by the objectives of the study and justification that is the rationale and the beneficiaries of the study. In chapter two literature related to the variables under examination and the topic is reviewed and analyzed in order to throw light on the study.

Cyclical theory of family breakdown has been used to give a framework and explanation on the street children phenomenon. The major objectives of the study were to examine whether poverty, child neglect and peer group influence lead to the street children phenomenon. The research design used was sample survey which relied on a sample of sixty respondents that is 55 boys and 5 girls aged between seven and seventeen years old, the District children officer was also interviewed in relation to the study. Purposive and mud ball sampling methods were used to arrive at the sample. Methods of data collection were interviews whereby close-ended and open-ended questions were used, observation method was also used. Frequency distribution tables, percentages and descriptive analysis have been used to analyze and interpret data collected from the respondents. Policies related to the study have been examined and implications are explained. The major findings of the study are that the three variables; poverty, child neglect and peer group influence are as major contributing factor to the street children phenomenon. The major cause of the street children phenomenon based on the findings is poverty, child neglect peer pressure respectively.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study was aimed at investigating the factors contributing to the street children in Meru Municipality, Meru Central District, Eastern Province ,Kenya .This chapter addressed the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypothesis, scope, justification of the study and conceptual framework respectively.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The problem of street children phenomenon was cited in Kenya in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this is the period when there was increased social urbanization and geographical social mobility. The urbanization, and geographical social mobility, interfered with such social system as the family unit. Increased urbanization, harsh economic conditions, seemingly increased selfishness might be the causes of the increased numbers of street children. The traditional extended family social support system has somehow broken down. More so the social responsibility towards children as everybody's belonging has long diminished, this, to some extent has led to the ever increasing numbers of street children, most of who come from poverty stricken families.

Meru municipality is located in Meru Central District, Eastern Province, Kenya. Meru municipality is an urban area covering more than sixty square kilometers. It borders Buuri Division to the west, Miriga Meru East Division to the East, Ntima to the South .It has a large open air market called gakoromone any many other kind of trading activities .It is the Meru Central District head quarters.

Meru Central District has a relatively high population ,most of the people live in rural areas where some are segmented into uneconomical segments coupled with low costs of cash crops grown there such as coffee, Mira, cotton and tea bushes. This has contributed to poverty and increased rural urban migration; children have also not been left behind, especially those coming from poverty stricken families, have been forced to move to the streets.

Meru municipality has many street children coming from bordering Districts such as Lakipia, Isiolo, Tharaka Nithi, Meru South and Meru North, and Meru Central; this may have been caused by constant civil wars. A few rehabilitation centers have been set up to cater for this increasing

problem. Among them are St Alomano Street Boys Rehabilitation Centre, St Alomano Street Girls Rehabilitation centre, Kaaga Methodist Street Children rehabilitation Centre and Rural Vision Rehabilitation Centre which have not been able to cater for all the street children in Meru Municipality.

1.3 STATEMENT TO THE PROBLEM

The most scaring problem that has faced children since the late 1960s is being forced to move to the streets. The street children phenomenon has gained recognition worldwide. However, little has been done to offset its causes. This problem could be an indicator that few people care for the welfare of children. This is because the society, starting with the family, which is important not only for protection of the child but also for socialization and guaranteeing respect for the children, has failed. Laws regarding rights of the child are either not applied or they are leniently applied.

The street children phenomenon could be a hindrance to success of strategies of poverty alleviation in Kenya and in particular Meru municipality. This is because children who grow up in the streets are likely to be illiterates and deviants who cannot participate effectively in bringing about development. More so, it can promote the vicious cycle of poverty especially today when children are maturing and bringing forth families and children in the streets.

The problem of street children is a threat to efforts of industrialization in Kenya and especially in Meru Municipality. This is because the children who grow up in the streets may lack the necessary skills and education needed to foster industrialization. The mass energies that are wasted are immeasurable, this phenomenon is a threat to security and stability, and this is because the street children have been known to gang up with terrorists leading to the ever-increasing crime rate. Moreover there have been allegations that street children have been lured into armed conflicts, which jeopardize their lives.

The phenomenon denies children their basic rights. Consequently their growth and development is hampered. The street children phenomenon is a threat to business undertakings in most of the towns today especially Meru Municipality. This is because the street children have been known to harass traders and their clients.

The major factors that may be contributing to street children are poverty, child neglect and peer group pressure.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The main objective was to investigate the factors contributing to the street children phenomenon.

1.4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To find out whether poverty was a contributing factor to the street children Problem

To find out whether child neglect led to the street children problem

To investigate whether peer group influence had any bearing to the street Children problem.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was aimed at answering the following questions:

Does poverty has any bearing on the street children phenomenon?

Is child neglect a contributing factor to the street children phenomenon?

Does peer group influence lead to the street children phenomenon?

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study investigated the factors contributing to the street children in Meru municipality, Meru Central District, Eastern province, Kenya. It was carried out in parts of Makutano where most of these street children reside, Gakoromone market, rehabilitation centers and District children office. The duration of the study was months between August and September .The area was chosen because of crucial factors which include the following;

- It was easier to access and carry out research as the area is located within the town center hence it was easier to move around and gather data.
- I was well conversant with the area of study hence getting information would not require further knowledge.
- The area has many street children hence getting a representative sample would be easy.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will investigate the factors contributing to the street Children phenomenon, which will act as an eye opener to the government, the Non-Governmental Organizations, the families and any other stakeholder dealing with the care and protection of the children, on the aspects that must be addressed to curb the problem and prevent further drift of the children to the streets.

The study will highlight recommendations that may assist in curbing the problem of street children. The study will enlighten the family, the traditional extended family, social support system, rehabilitation centers and the government on the rights of the child in regard to street children, who are among the most vulnerable in Kenya and in particular Meru Municipality.

The study will generate important information that may assist in the rehabilitation of street children coupled with information on how the problem can be prevented in Kenya and in particular Meru Municipality.

The study will be of much importance to the children who are already in the streets as it will recommend on the need to improve rehabilitation measures in Kenya and especially Meru Municipality.

It is hoped that this study will benefit researchers researching on the same line or in any other children related studies. This is because it will become a resourceful reference.

1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

Industrialization and urbanization have increased in Kenya over time and as a result traditional extended families have gradually broken due to increased individual ness The implication of this breakdown is the reduction of the social responsibility towards the needy in the society, nuclear families with financial problems are mostly not assisted by their relatives and in addition ,children who may be forced by poverty to move from their homes to homes of relatives are mostly turned down as everyone in the society wants to avoid additional burden due to the rising living standards. The society as structure has somehow broken down because of competitiveness and selfishness. Breakdown of family support systems like family welfare services might have led to the street children phenomenon.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cyclical theory of Family Breakdown has been used to explain the factors contributing to street children phenomenon in relation to the variables under study; poverty, neglect and peer group influence.

Gregory (1940p.140) propounded this theory, the theory states that history repeats itself over long periods of time, with societies and families moving through a series of fairly regular stages from emergence as major societies and families to the achievement of a level of greatness and then into stage of decline.

The emergence of a major society is associated with a strong and stable family with virtual absence of family breakdown. Under the discipline maintained by the strong family system the society attains whatever greatness it is destined to achieve and in the process develops a concept of individual rights that is designed to protect individual against abuse by family authorities. The concept of individual rights then express itself through among other things increases in divorce, child abuse and neglect.

High divorce rates, family breakdown, child neglect, are intertwined in a causal nexus. So the disorganization of societies is seen as resulting from subordination of family responsibilities to the pursuit of personal happiness.

As poverty increases so does family breakdown. The extended families disintegrate into nuclear families and the nuclear families disintegrate due to life's problems. All the ancients began as stable societies with strong family systems. Each in turn subordinated family goals to individual goals as it reached its zenith and each was replaced by a more primitive society with a weaker family system.

The last cycle is presumed to have begun during the middle ages, with the zenith having been reached about the time of the renaissance, and with the twentieth century representing a period of rapid decline in family stability.

When a family starts on the union of a husband and wife, it is characterized by stability that emanate from mutual agreement, love, commitment and relatively light financial burden. However as the "marriage grows old", children are born, financial burdens increase and love diminish. At this point strained relationships set in and the family may breakdown in actual sense or the relationships

“break” leading to suffering of children and their parents and further breakdown of the extended family ties.

The high rates of family disorganization are symptomatic of the sickness of today’s society and unless a drastic reorientation occurs soon, the period of societal greatness will soon come to an end. Lack of concern for family breakdown is a symptom of a decaying society.

This theory has been used in this study to explain the causes of the street children phenomenon in relation to the three variables under investigation, which were; poverty, child neglect and peer group influence.

Generally speaking, the street children phenomenon could be considered as an indicator of family breakdown. Structural breakdown of families and the breakdown of relationships in the families may make children go to the streets as explained in the theory, the major cause of family breakdown is poverty. When poverty is rife in a family set up, the parents are unable to provide basic needs to the children.

Moreover, strained relationships may be experienced between the parents as well as between children and their parents. Parents may be forced to expose their children to child labor or suffering related to lack of provisions. In other instances, parents may force their children to go to the streets to fend for themselves hence the street children phenomenon. Children from poverty stricken families may be forced by circumstances to break away from their families to move to the streets to seek for better living conditions.

The traditional extended families as explained in the theory have gradually broken down. The implication of this breakdown is the reduction of social responsibilities towards the needy. Nuclear families with financial problems are mostly not assisted by other relatives. In addition, children who may be forced by poverty to move from their homes to homes of relatives are mostly turned away as everybody in the society wants to avoid any additional burden. The society as a structure has somehow broken down because of competitiveness and selfishness. Breakdown of family support systems like family welfare services might have led to the street children phenomenon.

The parental responsibility towards children has somehow diminished over time. There has been an increased breakdown of relationships in the family as well as a decline in efforts of parents to give maximum care and protection to the children. This is what has been referred as neglect in the theory. Neglect itself is a result and a symptom of family breakdown. Many parents may neglect their children for no apparent reason. Owing to the neglect the children may end up in the streets because they may lack refuge in the extended family. This is because the extended family support system has broken in many societies today; Neglect may be a result of divorce, separation, widowhood, poverty or labeling of children as “unwanted”.

Family breakdown or disorganization may make children seek for approval and recognition from peers. Children from unstable families are more prone to influence of peers to indulge in anti social behavior and anti social reaction to life’s frustration for example through going to the streets. Family breakdown may make children lack adequate family socialization and care. This may make them more prone to peer influence, which could make them go to the streets.

Lack of the societal concern for family breakdown as explained in the theory is a symptom of a decaying society. If this is something to go by, then it can be argued that our society has seemingly decayed because if any, safety nets for neglected and poverty-affected children have not been established. In addition, the legislation barring parents from neglecting children is seemingly leniently applied. All this could have contributed to the street children phenomenon.

Though the theory is applicable in this study it has few shortcomings such as:

The cyclical theory of family breakdown cannot explain why children from financially and emotionally supportive families may end up in the streets. In addition, it does not explain why children of caring parents who experience marital stability may go to the streets.

Despite its limitations, the theory blends well with the study as breakdown at the family level and the larger society coupled with poverty, neglect and peer group influence may be causes of the street children phenomenon

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, literature related to the topic under study is reviewed with specific reference to the three variables under study, which are; poverty, child neglect and peer influence.

2.1 Poverty

Poverty may make children rebellious or cause family disintegration. Poverty, is a situation that does not have a universal single definition, it is an issue of great concern throughout the world. Schiller (1984) points out that despite all the time that has been spent on poverty research, no consensus has been reached on the appropriate location A. that is to say, it has not been agreed on what is poverty. Many people however, consider poverty as a complete and devastating inability to acquire basics of life.

In Kenya, poverty is a serious social problem especially in the rural areas. The Government of Kenya, (2001), in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2001-2004, states that, three quarters of the poor live in rural areas. The prevalence of overall poverty in 1994 was highest in the North Eastern Province (58 %), followed by Eastern (57 %), and Coast (55 %) while the lowest were Nyanza (42 %) and Central (32 %). However, by 1997 poverty had increased rapidly and its distribution had changed with Nyanza (63 %) recording the highest level followed by Coast (62 %). Nearly all the other provinces had prevalence levels of over fifty percent except Central, which had the lowest incidence (31 %). The incidence of rural food poverty was fifty one percent, while overall poverty reached fifty three percent of the rural population. The overall national incidence of poverty stood at fifty two percent. The number of poor increased from 3.7 million in 1972-3 to 11.5 million in 1994 and is now estimated to have reached some fifteen million. Increased poverty may contribute children going into the streets.

Gakunu, (2001), in a report entitled The role of children in poverty reduction, presented in the National Children's Conference Held between 23rd-25th August 2001 in Mbagathi Kenya, poverty levels were estimated at about 56% therefore, out of the 28 686 607 people of Kenya, about seventeen million people were poor. He added that children were greatest hit by poverty because

about 8.6 million children aged 0-18 years are considered as poor. The magnitude of poverty therefore should not be underestimated.

Many problems in the family are associated with poverty for example street children. The National Association of Social Workers, (1971 p.395), points out that

“some family problems are created by lack of funds resulting from Unemployment, disability, retirement and the like.... these problems have emotional and cultural consequences.”

According to the United Nations Development Program, (1995), on the world social summit, held from 6th to 12th March 1995, poverty, unemployment and social disintegration are the most compelling issues in the world today which must be addressed if there has to be hope of improving the conditions which can only be described as desperate under which as many as two billion of the world's poorest people live.

Moore, (1993), states that poor health, poor housing and anti-social activities are all related in different ways to poverty. In line with this, it is known that poverty leads to poor living conditions. The street children phenomenon could be an example of antisocial activity related to poverty because many children who end up in the streets may be from poor families.

On poverty and economic situation in Kenya, The Institute of Economic affairs, (2001), points out that our economy is in worse shape than it has never been and the standard of living for the average Kenyan continues to decline. Poverty is rife in Kenya and this situation is worsening. It has led to a myriad of other problems whose example is the street children.

Poverty has long been on agenda in many countries ,developed and the developing. ECONEWS Africa, (2001), on an article entitled poverty focused budget process states that in countries ravaged by widespread poverty, budgets are viewed as strategic entry points towards a comprehensive poverty eradication agenda. Paradoxically this has not been possible. The negative effects of this deep-rooted poverty are such problems as street children.

According to the Kenya Institute of Economic Analysis, (2001), almost four decades after political independence, poverty remains deeply rooted in Kenya's economic and social milieu.

Children from poverty-ridden families are exposed to many problems that may retard their social, psychological and physical development. The ACP EU Courier Magazine No. 0167, Of January/February 1998, points out that children born into conditions of poverty grow with all consequent risks of premature death, stunted growth, mental retardation and chronic illness.

Poverty may lead to such problems as increased school dropout. When children drop out of school, they might end up in streets. In line with this, the EU ACP Courier magazine, (1998 p.3), points out that:

Every year, the number of children dropping out of school due to poverty, parental Abuse and other reasons and the number of children denied access to other facilities for those same reasons are proliferating.

Economic hardships are severer in single parent families. According to The Courier magazine issue 0168 of March-April 1998, a one-parent family is severely handicapped in efforts to attain economic security. The loss of one potential breadwinner is a large and obvious constraint on economic stability. Potential family income is reduced by more than half with the departure of one parent where two parents exist.

Stability is important in the family; it makes family members live happily. There is a relationship between family income and stability. The Courier Magazine of March-April 1998 issue 0168 points out that income is the best predictor of family stability, continued economic deprivation is likely to undermine a family's stability...a high percentage of family break ups occur among the poor due to economic stress.

In Kenya today, the poverty levels in the rural areas are escalating. In the UNICEF Newsletter issue No. 2 (1997), The Vice President of Kenya, Professor George Saitoti is quoted as having said that the harsh reality is that more than 46% of our rural population is categorized as being below the poverty line and that there is concern for children in need of special protection embracing the highly

visible street and working children, the children prostitutes, children exploited as drug traffickers or exposed to many other forms of abuse and deprivation.

Lack of gainful employment, in the family, leads to poverty and poor living conditions. According to the United Nations Development Program, (1995), Lack of gainful employment not only perpetuate substandard living conditions in many parts of the world, but contribute to the widening gap between the rich and the poor. The shortages of productive and fulfilling work, coupled with decline in real wages contribute to breakdown of families as well as migration and social conflict hence street children phenomenon.

Provision of basic needs in the families depends not only on income but also on resources and facilities; thus, poverty is indicted by other factors apart from low-income levels. Moore,(1993), points out that it is not just money that decides how people live it is access to resources that makes the difference between drowning in poverty and managing just to keep your head above water. To measure poverty only by income is inaccurate- what facilities people have and what social activities they are able to engage in, are the real indicators of poverty. Poverty may be indicated by signs such as children going and living in the streets.

The UNICEF (1992), in a report of matters that were discussed in the World Summit for Children held in New York in Late September 1990, states that the capacity of families to meet their needs by their own efforts has been undermined by unemployment, falling incomes and rising prices. At the same time, cuts in social services have weakened “safety nets” just when the strain on them is increasing especially with increasing numbers of street children.

2:2 Child Neglect

Child neglect has been on increase. It has contributed to a large degree to the ever-increasing numbers of children in need of special protection who include the street children. Child neglect or rather willful refusal to give a child care and protection may make children feel inadequate, unwanted or confused on how they are supposed to behave. Inadequate childcare is detrimental to child growth and development.

Clifford (1974 p.6) says that:

The effects of inadequate child care, the failure to socialize children, leaves them with inadequate control of their impulses so that many of them have to learn life's lessons the hard way and perhaps only when they are in conflict with the adult society. It can leave children aggressive, immature or inadequate in some cases the results can be very serious indeed such as living in the streets.

Parents have an obligation of meeting children needs and emotional support, deliberate failure to do this is termed as neglect thus, law may punish such a parent. Gertz et-al (1980), asserts that, married or not, parents have the primary responsibility of supporting and caring for their own children.

If they fail to do so, the state is obligated to step in and provide necessary support and care. He adds that the basic legally enforceable duty of parents is to provide food and shelter to their children. Parents also have a moral duty to provide love, affection, and kind treatment to the child.

There are many changes that have occurred in the society, the duty of childcare has somehow been individualized, unlike in the past when childcare was the responsibility of every member of the society, starting from the extended family, things have somehow changed. Over time as sociologists' points out, many changes have taken place within the family as a social institution. Commenting on the family and its history, Saucy (1966) note that from 18th century the history of the family is one of slow decay. This is true, the many changes that have occurred in the family, more specifically the breakdown of the traditional family social support system is a sign of decay. In addition more than never before divorce rates have increased. Child neglect has been on the increase. The consequence of this is the ever-increasing numbers of children in Need of Special Protection such as the street children.

According to the Daily Nation of 22nd September 2001,p.4 the prevailing harsh economic conditions are taking toll on the family unit. With the parents pre-occupied with their professional and business pursuits, many children are left unattended to. The backlash is frightening; they result into drug abuse and teenage sex going to the streets among other antisocial habits.

Child neglect has many negative side effects. It can make children rebellious and anti-social. Neglected children might decide to go to live in the streets because they find home life unbearable.

The family has an important role of socializing and taking care of children. Writing on the role of the family, Mark et-al (1997), say that the family has a central role in the education, socialization and care of children.

Marital instability manifested by divorce and separation as well as disagreements may lead to child neglect. Consequently, children may end up in the streets in the bid of looking for a more comfortable living place outside the home. On this Hess et-al, (1988), noted that although it may be a solution to problems, the end of a marriage has many negative consequences, particularly for children and women who become single parents

In broken families child neglect is more prevalent. This may lead to street children phenomenon. Single parenthood and step parenting may have negative impacts on children. Howse, (1991), explains that the stress of single parents and the subsequent effect of those parental stresses on the children, involved cannot be ignored. In addition, step parenting has its own set possibilities and problems.

When children are neglected they may become social misfits. Undugu Society of Kenya, (2000), quoted Professor George Saitoti the Vice President of Kenya when he was launching the Undugu Society of Kenya and University of Nairobi Street Children Rehabilitation Project at the university of Nairobi as having said that children if ignored, children could end up in streets and that if street children are ignored, they are likely to develop into criminals and even be recruited into armies.

Calam, et-al, (1987), commenting on cruelty against children points out that, the cruel treatment of children has a very long history; in ancient times children were used for ritual sacrifices, and unwanted children were left to die.

The family is charged with all the responsibilities of ensuring that children grow and develop well. Hess, et al, (1988), states that like other institutions, the family is a set of norms and behaviors. In the family system, these are clustered around the essential activities of reproduction, socialization, protection, intimacy and care. Family-based relationships are essential features of the social structures of all human activities.

Today, the social responsibilities that community members had for each other and towards the needy, has seemingly diminished, Competitiveness and selfishness have increased especially in our African society, Clifford, (1974), says that for Africa, a new spirit of competitiveness and self seeking to displace the older values of cooperation and group solidarity have emerged.

Clifford's view indicates that the traditional social structures that were set to ensure that every member of the society lived well have broken. The extended families that held nuclear families together have somehow broken due to migration, individualism and increased economic hardships. All these negative changes have led to child neglect especially where children are either orphaned or living in situation of poverty, where their parents are unable to provide. In cases where parents die, very few members of the extended family volunteer to foster them. This may make children in such a situation end up in streets.

The incidence of alcohol consumption and alcoholism leads to problems in the family. On this issue, Davies et-al, (1978), states that marital conflict; separation and divorce are consistently found to be more common in marriages of alcoholics and parental conflicts a prominent theme in the literature on alcoholism

2.3 PEER GROUP INFLUENCE

Peer groups may influence children positively or negatively. Negative influence by peers may lead to deviant behavior. A good example of such behavioral problems is when it makes children go to the streets. To some extent child neglect may make many children more prone to peer pressure

According to Howse et-al, (1991), more and more children are experiencing negative influence of the peer groups on their lives and decreasing influence of adults.

The peer groups as agents of socialization may socialize a child into behavior that is not acceptable to the parents and other agents of socialization such as schools and church. According to Mussen, (1981), schools and peer groups are increasing in conflict and the individual appears to learn very different things in these two subsystems of the society .The conflicts between values emphasized by schools and colleges and the values emphasized by various peer groups raises serious questions about the ways in which these two subsystems can be more effectively related.

All human beings are social beings. They interact with others and share ideas and experiences, while in groups and other relationships, every human being seeks acceptance and recognition. Different groups that individuals find themselves in influence their behavior either positively or negatively. If it influences behavior negatively it may lead to incidences such as children going to the streets.

Mushanga, (1976), points out that individuals are identified with a number of social groups each of which has its conduct norms. A person is a member of a family, which is responsible for his socialization, and internalization of social norms; he is also a member of the playgroup, political party, clan, school, work group and many others. As a member of these groups he acquires norms which may sustain, weaken, reinforce or even contradict the norms he had earlier internalized in his personality structure.

Children in peer groups may be influenced by their friends to reject any form of adult authority. Peer groups are mostly autonomous. Members of peer groups may reject or resist any control or advice from those outside the group. Cohen, (1971), emphasizes that there is group autonomy among peer groups, or intolerance of restraints except from the group itself. Peer gang members are unusually resistant to the efforts of home; school and other agencies to regulate not only their delinquent activities but also any activities carried on within the group. Membership in gangs is a result of ineffective family supervision, the breakdown of parental authority and hostility of the child towards the parents.

In every group that individuals find themselves in, he or she internalizes values that are instilled into him. Brim et-al, (1966 p.4), points out that the individual acquires the culture of his group(s) through socialization. In this respect, the researcher points out that when cultures learnt from the family and other agents of socialization conflict, a child may become maladjusted and resort to such behavior as going to the streets.

There is a relationship between personality development and an individual's social environment. Thomas, (1962), states that personality development is a product of groups and individuals. If groups negatively influence an individual, he or she may result in deviance hence ending up on the streets.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher sets forth the methods that were used to accomplish the objectives of the study, it addressed the techniques and procedures, which were adopted for data collection and analysis. The methodology based on the overall objectives of the study. The following was considered in the process of data collection, research design, sampling procedure, data collection tools, techniques of data analysis and limitations of the study.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design involved both quantative and qualitative, which includes questionnaires and interview schedules respectively.

3.1.1 SAMPLE SURVEY

Sample survey design was used to investigate the factors contributing to the street children phenomenon. This helped to investigate the causes of the problem from a representative population, as it was not possible to study the whole population due to time and financial inadequacy.

The sample survey design made it possible to interview a cross section of the street children in Meru Municipality. This composed a representative sample which was used to generalise information derived from the findings and conclusions.

3.2 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The sample drawn for this study was sixty respondents .The sample was developed through the use of purposive and mud/snow ball sampling methods.

3.2.1 PURPOSIVE METHOD

Parts of Meru Municipality were established where the children resided and then purposively one street child was identified interviewed. The respondent led me to other territories where other street children resided.

3.2.2 MUDBALL SAMPLING METHOD

Mud ball sampling method was used hand in hand with purposive sampling method. The identified child helped to identify other street children from different territories, this procedure went on until the required sample size was attained and interviewed.

3.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Structured interview schedules, observation methods, questionnaires and documentary analysis were used to collect data

3.3.1 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interview schedules had closed ended questions and open-ended questions. The open ended questions were used to get clarification from respondents while closed ended questions were used to get brief answers necessary for some questions.

The face-to-face interviews were used which enabled the use observation method in detecting when incorrect answers are given and therefore restructure the questions. Kiswahili, Kimeru and English languages were used to collect data.

3.3.2 OBSERVATION METHOD

Observation method was applied concurrently with other techniques in understanding non-verbal communication of the respondents and in approximating their ages while interviewing them.

3.3.3 QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were useful in collecting data from a large number of people. Some were submitted directly to the respondents, and very few were mailed to the District children officer, social workers working in different rehabilitation centers. Before their distribution they were pre-tested with small group who were assumed to be similar to the said respondents.

3.4.4 DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

Documentary analysis technique was also used for example through literature review in particular. The data was collected from several reports, newspapers, textbooks, District children's office, journals and rehabilitation centers.

3.5 TECHNIQUES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The data was obtained through the above methods and was manually analyzed using simple scientific calculators. It was presented in form of frequency tables, pie charts, percentages, and in terms of statements, especially for qualitative data. This is because modern technologies such as computers were available only at report writing stage and not at data analysis stage.

3.6 EDITING

This was done at the end of each day's work. This ensured reliability, accuracy, and constancy. The editing was done where wrong entries were cross checked, and any omissions, inconsistencies were edited.

3.8 CODING

A complete coding schedule was done to ensure that information was classified into meaningful form. This involved translating edited responses into numerical figures.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRATATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter data collected from the respondents has been analyzed.

Question seven of the interview schedule was administered to capture at a glance reasons as to why the sixty respondents decided to move to the streets. The reasons are presented in table 4.1;

Table 4.1 Reasons why the respondents moved to the streets

N=60

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Problems at home	59	98.3
For pleasure	1	1.7
TOTAL	60	100

The table 4.1 shows that fifty- nine (59) or 98.3% of the respondents were in the streets due to problems at home, while one (1.7%) of the respondent was in the streets to seek for town pleasure.

This shows that problems at homes that may range from neglect, abuse or any other hardship at home contribute to the street children phenomenon. The worst problems stated by the respondents were various forms of abuse and neglect. Child abuse may contribute to the street children phenomenon.

Item 1 in section B of the interview schedule was administered to determine whether all the parents of the respondents were alive. The responses are presented in table 4.2

Table 4.2 Respondents' Parenthood Position

N=60

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
All parents alive	20	33.3
All parents dead	19	31.7
One of the parents dead	21	35.0
TOTAL	60	100.0

Table 4.2 indicates that twenty (20) or 33.3% of the respondents had both parents, nineteen (19) or 31.7% of the respondents had lost both parents while twenty-one or 35 % of the respondents had lost one of their parents. This scenario implies that majority of the respondents were under the care of one parent or that of well-wishers or relatives. In actual sense nineteen of the respondents were orphans while twenty-one of them were under care of single parents. There could be a relationship between orphan hood, single parenthood and poverty. Orphaned and respondents under care of one of their parents or that of a relative or a well wisher may be more prone to poverty. The respondents could therefore have moved to the streets due to poverty.

Question two in the interview schedule was asked to the respondents to determine the occupations of their parents. Forty five (45) or 75% of the respondents' parents or guardians were self-employed; fourteen (14) 23.3% were on wage employment while only one (1.7%) was in formal employment. The forty parents/guardians who were self-employed were either farmers or small-scale business people. An individual's occupation determines his or her economic status. Asked whether they thought their parents or guardians used to earn enough incomes from their occupations, the street children gave responses that are indicated in figure 4.3

Table 4.3 Earning Capacity of the respondents' parents\guardians

N=60

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Respondents who thought parents had enough income	3	5
Those who thought their parents\guardians did not earn enough income	57	95
TOTAL	60	100

Table 4.3 indicates that, three (3) or 5% of the respondent's parents were earning adequate incomes while fifty seven (57) or 95% were not earning adequate incomes. The explanations given by the three respondents whose parents were earning enough income is that those parents or guardians could provide adequately for the respondents while at their homes, those who said that they thought their parents did not earn enough income explained that their parents could not provide basic needs to them. The incidence of poverty, depicted by failure to provide due to inadequate income may lead to the street children phenomenon and other forms of children suffering. The District children officer who was interviewed said that poverty was the major contributing factor to the street children phenomenon and many other problems faced by children all over the world. Poverty, indicated by low incomes has been identified as a barrier to children rights.

Item three in section B of the street children interview schedule to determine the family sizes from the perspective of the number of siblings the respondents had. Twenty-five (25) 41.7% of the respondents had 1-4 siblings; twenty-one of the respondents (21) or 35% had 5-10 while fourteen (14) 23% of the respondents had over ten siblings. This shows that majority of the respondents were from large families. Large family size may lead to poverty and eventually neglect. Where it leads to poverty, the children may end up in streets, hence the phenomenon under study.

Question four (b) was asked to determine whether the respondents' parents\guardians had a piece of land. Thirty-three (33) or 55% of the respondents said that their parents\guardians had pieces of land

while twenty-seven (27) or 45% of the respondents reported that their parents\guardians had no pieces of land. Landless families may be forced to live in rented houses; they may further be forced to incur a lot of cost on foodstuffs, which may increase their levels of poverty. All these factors may lead to such problems as street children.

Out of the thirty-five respondents who said that their parents\guardians had pieces of land, thirty said that the sizes of those pieces were less than two acres. According to them, these pieces of land were inadequate, as they could not produce enough food or incomes for their families. The researcher, on the same line argues that less than two acres of land may not support a family well especially when the families are large. When a family experiences problems related to inadequate pieces of land, children may decide to go to live in the streets.

Item five of the interview schedule was administered to investigate on the average number of meals the respondents families used to have per day. Table 4.4 indicates the findings

Table 4.4 Average Number of Meals Taken by the Respondents Families Per day

N=60

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-2 meals per day	35	59
3 meals per day	23	38
Over three meals per day	2	3
TOTAL	60	100

Table 4.4 shows that thirty five (35) or 59%of the respondents' families had either one or two meals per day while twenty three (23) or 38% of the respondents had an average of three meals while two (2) or 3% had over three meals per day. The reasons given by majority of the respondents who said that their families had one or two meals per day were that their parents\guardians could not afford to provide more than those meals. One or two meals per day are inadequate for the growth and development of children. Inability of parents to provide adequate numbers of meals to the children may make children leave home and go to the streets.

Item six was administered to the respondents to investigate whether the respondents' parents\guardians had houses. It was found out that all the respondents' parents or guardians had houses either rented or self-constructed. Part of the same question was aimed at finding out the type of houses that the respondents parents\guardians had. Fifty-four (54) or 90% of the respondents said that their parents had temporary houses while five (5) or 8.3% had semi-permanent houses and one of the respondents said that they owned a permanent house. This suggest that most of the respondents families, were poverty ridden. This is because; temporary houses are attributed to low socio economic status.

Asked whether they and their siblings were schooling in question seven, ten (10) or 16.7% of the respondents said they were while fifty (83.3%) said they were not schooling. On probing further, majority of those who had not gone to school said that their parents\guardians could not afford to take them to school. Inability to take children to take children in school due to financial reasons may make children go to the streets to try and fend for themselves.

Item eight was administered to the respondents to determine whether the respondents and their siblings were getting clothing and other basic necessities. Five (5) 8.3% were getting all the basic necessities while fifty five (55) or 91.7% were not getting all basic necessities. Asked why they were not getting all necessities, majority of the respondents said their parents could not afford. Failure to provide well for children may make children go to the streets

The next variable that was investigated by the researcher was child neglect. Questions 9 to 17 were asked to determine whether the respondents were neglected.

Item nine in section c of the street children interview schedule was administered to investigate the attitudes of the respondents towards their parents\guardians. That is, whether they thought the parents were good not. Figure 4.5 shows the responses;

Figure 4.1 Respondents' Description of Parents\Guardians

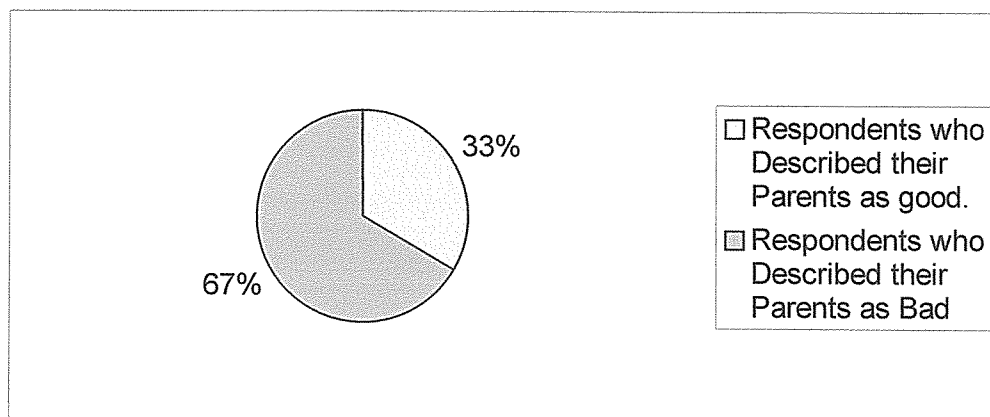


Figure 4.1 indicates that twenty (20) or 33.3% of the respondents said that their parents \guardians were good while forty (40) or 66.7% of the respondents argued that their parents were bad. Those respondents who said their parents or guardians were bad explained that they were either drunkards, batterers or quarrelsome. When parents\guardians are described as bad by their children, it could be due to neglect.

Item ten was administered to find out whether the respondents' parents or guardians had time for taking care of the respondents and their siblings. Twenty (20) or 33.3% of them said that the parents\guardians had time for them while forty (40) or 66.7% responded that their parents\ guardians did not have time for taking care of them. Those respondents who told the researcher that, their parents\ guardians did not have time for taking care of them explained it was due to business or refusal to take responsibility. This depicts that most of the respondents experienced neglect, which could have made them, go to the streets.

Asked to rate the quality of care they were receiving from their parents\guardians in item eleven, fifteen (15) or 25% of the respondents rated the care as fair, five (5) or 8.3% as good while thirty (30) or 50% rated the care as poor. Poor parental care may be described as neglect. This neglect may make children go to the streets.

Question twelve was administered on the respondents to investigate whether they were always taken to the hospital when sick. Twenty said that they were not taken while forty were not always taken to

hospital. In line with this the Meru Central District Children Officer said that some children were in the streets due to their parent\guardians' failure to meet their basic needs like medical care. This deliberate failure to give children care when sick may indicate neglect.

Item thirteen was administered to determine whether respondents were being advised by their parents on matters of life. Fifteen (15) or 25% said they were while forty-five (45) or 75% were not being advised by their parents\guardians. Failure of parents to advice children can be considered as neglect. When children are not advised by parents\guardians they may turn into deviants and go to the streets.

Asked whether they were always given food whenever it was available in item fourteen of the interview schedule, the respondents gave answers illustrated in Table 4.6 below

Table 4.5 Provision of food

N=60

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Those who were given food whenever it was available.	23	38.3
Those who were denied food even when available	37	61.7
TOTAL	60	100

Table 4.6 shows that twenty-three (23) or 38.3%) of the respondents were always given food whenever it was available while thirty seven (37) or 61.7% of the respondents were sometimes not given food even when it was available. When they were told to explain why they were sometimes denied food, they explained that their parents or guardians either denied them for no apparent reason or forced them to perform difficult tasks before they could be given food. This tendency of parents to deny children food is neglect. This form of abuse can make children go to the streets hence the street children phenomenon.

Asked whether their parents\guardians were drunkards or alcoholics in item fifteen, Forty-one (41) or 68% said they were while nineteen (19) or 31.7% of the respondents said that their parents\guardians were not drunkards\ alcoholics.

There is a close relationship between alcoholism, neglect and poverty. Children of alcoholics or drunkards are more likely to be deprived of parental care and guidance. When they are deprived of care and guidance, they may decide to leave for the streets. The District children officer when asked in the interview schedule to highlight factors that have made Meru Municipality have high numbers of street children said that alcoholism and drunkenness that is common in Meru and the neighboring Districts might have contributed to neglect and child abuse, which could have made the children go to the streets.

When asked whether they used to fend for themselves while at their homes, in item sixteen of the interview schedule, thirty-five (35) or 58.3% of the respondents said that they were sometimes forced to fend for themselves, while twenty five (25) or 41.7% said they were not fending for themselves. Respondents who said that they were fending for themselves said that they were doing so either due to their parents\ guardians' inability to provide or negligence.

When children are left to fend for themselves they develop an attitude of independence. Consequently, they might decide to go to live in the streets on realization that they can support themselves even when parents neglect them.

Question seventeen was administered to the respondents to determine whether there was any relative(s) who was willing to take care of them before they moved to the streets. Twenty (20) or 33.3% had willing relatives while forty (40) or 66.7% claimed that there was no relative who was willing to foster them. Among the forty who said that no relative was willing to take care of them, eight said that they did not know any other relative apart from their parents and siblings, two said that none of their relatives (s) knew that they were going to the streets, five said that the relatives hated their families while five said that the relatives hated them. On the same, the Meru Central children officer lamented that, failure of relatives to take care of neglected and orphaned children due to the breakdown of the traditional social fibre might have contributed to the street children phenomenon.

This scenario suggests that the social responsibility that existed in the traditional social support system is slowly fading away. This is because even close relatives are known to have neglected and left the orphaned and abused children to suffer by denying them refuge and care. This might have led to the ever-increasing numbers of children in need of special protection such as the street children.

Item eighteen was administered to the respondents to find out whether the respondents knew any children who were already in the streets while they were at home. The findings are presented in the table 4.6

Tale 4.6 Number of respondents who had friends in the streets

N=60

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Those who had friends in the streets	25	41.7
Those who did not have	35	58.3
TOTAL	60	100

Table 4.6 above shows that twenty five (41.7%) of the respondents had friends who were already in the streets while they were at their homes, while thirty-five (58.3%) did not have any friends who were already in the streets. The ones who had friends in the streets might have been lured by them to go to the streets.

Item nineteen was administered to determine whether the respondents were associating with the street children friends while at their homes. Ten (10) or 16.7%, were associating with them, while fifteen (15) Or 25% of the respondents were not. Association with street children may make children who live at home learn the drives, motives and rationalization as to why street life is better than home life. When this happens the children are inclined to go to the streets hence the phenomenon of street children.

Question twenty (b) was administered to explore whether the respondents moved to the streets in company of their friends. It was found out that twenty- two (22) or 36.7% who were accompanied

by their friends could have moved to the streets due to peer pressure, or themselves influenced their companions to move to the streets.

Item twenty-one was administered to investigate whether the respondents felt that their friends influenced them to go to live in the streets. Eleven (11) or 18.3% said that their friends influenced them while forty-nine (49) or 81.7% were not influenced by their friends/peers. The District children office when asked whether peer group influence could be a factor contributing to the street children phenomenon said that it does to some extent. As such peer group influence which might be a precursor to street childhood, does not lead to the phenomenon as poverty, child neglect does. Children from poverty-ridden families and those who are neglected are more prone to peer pressure according to the researcher's findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter dealt with summary and conclusion, lessons learnt, problems encountered and recommendations of the study.

5.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was aimed at investigating the factors contributing to the street children phenomenon. It was carried out in Meru Municipality Meru Central District of Eastern province of Kenya.

The variables examined were poverty, child neglect, and peer group influence.

The background to the study traces the onset of the problem to the late 1960s is given. The problem is clearly stated followed there after by the objectives of the study and justification; that is the rationale and the beneficiaries of the study. In chapter two literatures related to the variables under examination and the topic is reviewed and analyzed in order to throw light on the study.

Cyclical theory of family breakdown has been used to give a framework and explanation on the street children phenomenon. The major objectives of the study were to examine whether poverty, child neglect and peer group influence lead to the street children phenomenon. The research design used was sample survey which relied on a sample of sixty respondents that is 55 boys and 5 girls aged between seven and seventeen years old, the District children officer was also interviewed in relation to the study. Purposive and mud ball sampling methods were used to arrive at the sample. Methods of data collection were interviews whereby close-ended and open-ended questions were used, observation method was also used. Frequency distribution tables, percentages and descriptive analysis have been used to analyze and interpret data collected from the respondents. Policies related to the study have been examined and implications are explained.

The major findings of the study are that the three variables; poverty, child neglect, and peer group influence are a major contributing factor to the street children phenomenon.

Based on the findings, the researcher deduced that poverty is the most prevalent cause of the street children phenomenon. This is indicated by the fact that nineteen or 31.7% of the respondents were

orphans while twenty-one or 35% of the respondents had one parent. Moreover, majority of the respondent's parents were either self-employed or wage-employed. According to the respondents these occupations did not enable them to earn enough money to cater for the families. Most of the respondents were from large families. Poverty was further indicated by the fact that majority of the respondents that is 45% parents were landless in addition majority of the respondents used to have inadequate numbers of meals per day. According to the findings majority of the respondents' parents or guardians had temporary houses. This may suggest that they were poor because conventionally temporary houses are attributed to low economic status. Many of the respondents and their siblings had never been enrolled in school. Those who were enrolled had dropped out due to financial problems. Moreover most of the respondents said that they were not getting all the basic needs either due their parents or guardians inability to provide.

Child neglect is the second factor that has made the children to go to the street. The first indicator that the children were neglected is the fact that majority of their parents or guardians did not have time for taking care of the respondents. More so most of the respondents said that their parents were bad because they used to abuse and deny them basic needs even when they had money to do so. A big number of the respondents rated the care they were receiving from their parents as poor. Majority of the respondents were not being taken to the hospital when sick, this is an indicator of neglect, 75% of the respondents were not receiving any parental or guardian pieces of advice that could enable them make wise decisions on matters affecting them. Neglect was further indicated by the fact that some of the respondents were denied food even when it was available, moreover, most of the respondents that is, 68.3% said that their parents were alcoholics or drunkards who used to harass and fail to provide adequately for them. A large number of the respondents said that they were fending for themselves as they were neglected. The findings indicate most of the respondents were rejected by their relatives when they went to seek refuge before moving to the streets. This shows that the relatives neglected them.

Peer group influence, though last in the order contributes to the street children phenomenon. Majority of the respondents revealed that they had friends in the streets as their friends before going to the streets and they used to associate with them. It was further found that a few of the respondents were accompanied by their friends to the streets. Based on the findings, eleven (18.3%) of the

respondents felt that their friends influenced them to go live in the streets. This implies that peer group influence can be a cause of the street children phenomenon.

The major cause of the street children phenomenon based on the findings is poverty, followed by neglect and the last in the order is peer pressure.

5.3 LESSONS LEARNT

The study found that there were people in the streets who had been in the streets for more than twenty years.

It was also found that a few of the children and the adults in the streets were “married” therefore there is an indication that the street families phenomenon is slowly growing.

The study found that many of the children in Meru Municipality streets had escaped out of rehabilitation centers. The explanation given by those who had escaped was that they were ill-treated and denied permission to sniff glue.

It was found that droughts and clashes in Isiolo District, Meru North and Tharaka Nithi District had contributed to some children from those Districts to go to live in Meru town streets because many had lost one or both parents due to inter tribal conflicts as the respondents claimed.

5.4 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- The study was financially constrained as far as typing, stationary costs; printing photocopying and binding was concerned. Lack of money to motivate the respondents led to some not responding to the study because they felt that they were gaining nothing from it.
- The time within which the research was conducted was not enough to conduct a thorough study especially because I had to travel to Kenya to collect data.
- Some respondents gave irrelevant information while others out of suspicion were not willing to disclose the required information

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, recommendations pegged on the findings, on how the street children phenomenon can be alleviated or curbed are highlighted;

1. In view of the findings, poverty is the most prevalent problem that forces children to go to the streets. Therefore the government, the Non-governmental Organizations and religious organizations in conjunction with community members should put efforts in implementing strategies aimed at poverty reduction. This is through implementation of programs and projects on agriculture and the informal sectors such as the Jua Kali sector, which can increase employment opportunities and enable families increase their incomes. This will prevent or reduce the street children phenomenon.
2. According to the findings child neglect causes the street children phenomenon. Therefore the study recommends that the government, the NGOs, religious organizations and social workers should enlighten parents on the need to give maximum care and protection to their children. This should be done through seminars, campaigns and other education sessions such as meetings. In the same regard, the government should cushion children against neglect by punishing severely parents who neglect their children. This will prevent incidences where children go to the streets due to parental neglect.
3. Street children phenomenon is to some extent caused by peer group influence. Based on this finding, the study recommends that the parents, relatives, religious leaders and adult community members should educate and sensitize children on the need to avoid negative peer group influence. More so the parents should monitor the kind of friends that their children have and warn them against having friends who might influence them negatively. This will reduce tendencies of children going to the streets due to peer group influence.
4. The religious organizations, the government, social workers and the Non-governmental organizations dealing with children welfare should try to sensitize the community members, especially the extended families on the need to foster orphaned children. In the same line, concerted efforts by the government, Non governmental organizations and community members should be

made to establish institutions to cater for children in the streets who have no relatives or homes. This will reduce the number of living in the streets.

5. The government should encourage more volunteers in the children department, increase resources and explore ways of establishing a ministry for Children as they make up a large proportion of the Kenyan population. This will ensure that issues related to care and protections of children are given more emphasis. This will reduce numbers of children who go to the streets due to abuse and other problems.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE STREET CHILDREN

INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer the following questions as frankly as possible.

All information granted will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

SECTION A: PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

1. Name (optional).....
2. Age.....
3. Sex.....
4. Marital status.....
5. Home District.....
6. When did you come to the streets.....
7. Explain in summary what made you come to the streets

.....
.....

8 Do you think that poverty,child neglect and peer pressure contribute to street children phenomenon?

9 How can your status be improved?

APPEDIX 11

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE MERU CENTRAL DISTRICT CHILDREN OFFICER

INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer the following questions as sincerely as possible

Information given will be treated with confidentiality

SECTION A PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

1. Name (optional)
2. For how long have you been children officer in Meru Central District?
3. Please explain briefly the activities carried out by your office in relation to the street children problem.

SECTION B

1. Do you think that poverty, child neglect and peer pressure are major contributing factors to the street children problem in Meru Municipality
2. Approximately how many street children are in Meru municipality?
3. How can their status be improved?

APPENDIX III

FINANCIAL PLAN (BUDGET)

ACTIVITY	COST	
	KSH	UG SHS
Stationary	1000.00	25000.00
Typing	4000.00	100000.00
Transport	1500.00	37500.00
Meals	2000.00	50000.00
Photo copying	1000.00	25000.00
Field accustomisation costs	1000.00	25000.00
Internet fee and air time	1000.00	25000
Miscellaneous	5000.00	125000.00
Total	16500.00	412500.00

APPEDIX 1111

DEFINATION OF CONCEPTS

Children

According to the United Nations the term children refer to persons under eighteen years of age. This definition has been adopted for this study.

Street children

This concept has been used to refer to children who live in the streets of the towns. In this study ,focus was given to those children who were permanently in the streets .The characteristics of these children includes, glue sniffing, tattered clothes, and dirtiness.

Phenomenon

According to Hornby (1985), the term phenomenon is defined as a remarkable, unusual thing or happening.

This definition has been adopted .This is because the situation of the children living in the streets is unusual since children are expected to be living at their homes and not in the streets.

Large family size

In this study large family size refers to families with more than five children.

N.G.Os

Non Government Organizations

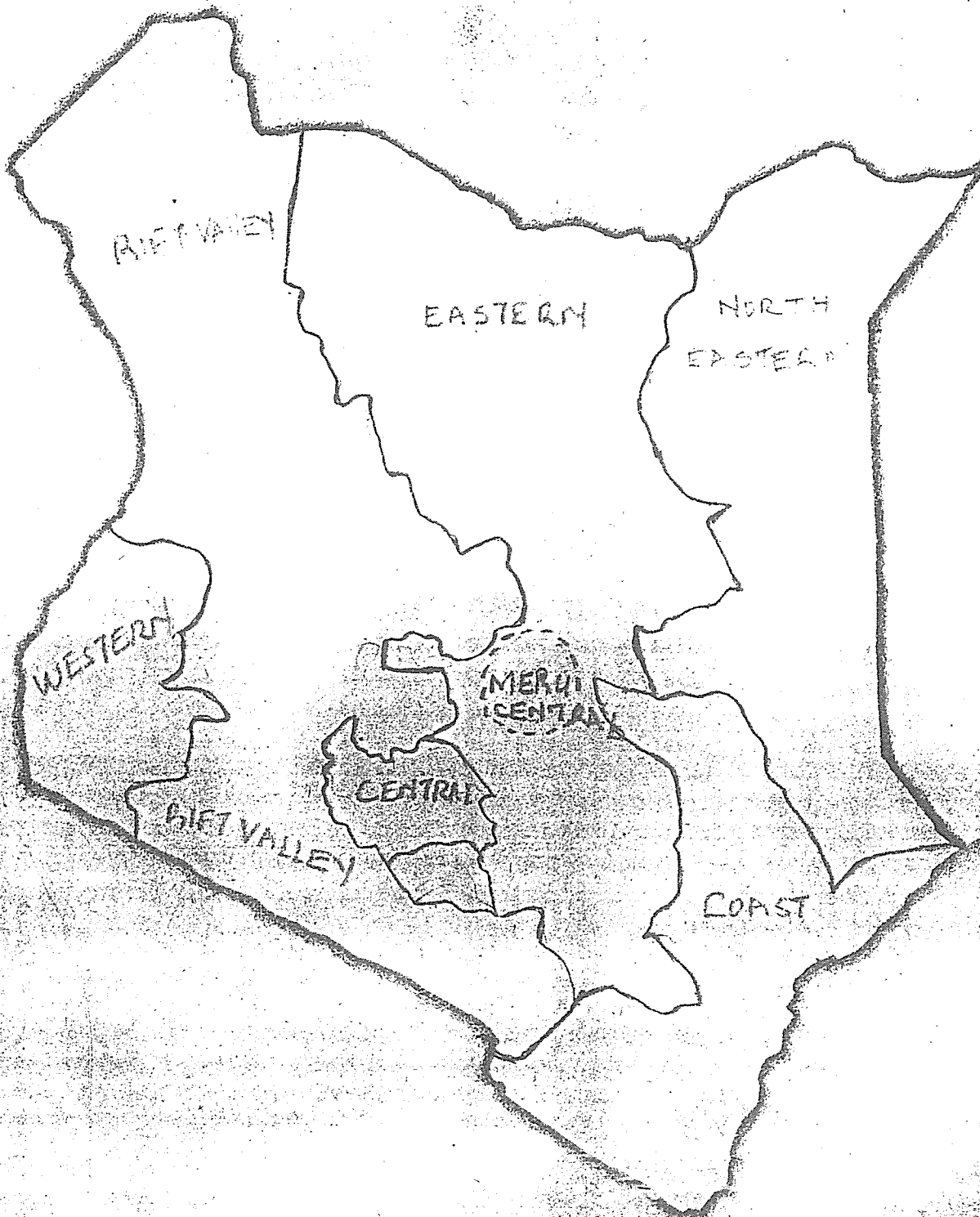
U.N.C.E.F

United Nations Children Education Fund

E.C.O.NEWS

Economic News

LOCATION OF MERU CENTRAL DISTRICT



KEY

1:5,000,000

0 100 200 KM

- NATIONAL BOUNDARY
- PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY