

Family Problem as a Contributing Factor for Street Children. The Case of Nekemte Town.

Tesfaye Diriba

*Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology,
Faculty of Social Science,
Wollega University Ghimbi Campus*

Abstract: Street children as a social problem is common in the world and more prevalent in developing countries and which is also true in the study area as the results gathered from the respondents and different aspect of the community shows. A combination of factors contributed and results with the happening of street children. From those factors family problem is one which highly contributes for the spread of street children in the study area.

The main objective of this study was to justify family problem as the contributing factor for streetism in Nekemte town. So, to attain this objective, a cross-sectional study design was utilized. The researchers used mixed approach and both quantitative and qualitative tools of data collection were used. The data was collected from 100 street children and other 10 concerned living in Nekemte Town. In order to collect the data three types of instruments were used which includes questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion. Hence, the results of the findings go in line with the objectives of this study. The highest proportions of street children were from instable families (53.2%) and the majorities (51.6 %) of their parents were engaged in low income activities with monthly income of less than 530 Ethiopian birr. As a result they were unable to provide their children with sufficient materials and financial requirements. Although street children were pushed by different factors including family breakdown, death of parents/ guardians, peer pressure, abuses of step father/mother family conflict and labor exploitation in the family, the majority (58.1 %) of street children stated as they were pushed to the street by the problem of poverty of their family.

Key Words: *Family problem, contributing factor, Street Children*

I. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of street children is not a new phenomenon and neither limited to certain geographical areas. Street children as a social problem are a global problem encountering countries of the world. From these children, certain numbers of them are living in the streets and sleep in an open or in empty buildings, and they have no one to support them in their daily struggle for their survival (Hatloy & Huser, 2005). Throughout the world in general and Africa in particular were witnessing rapid and wide ranging of socioeconomic and political changes with both positive and negative consequences, from which the negative consequences of these changes

leads large number of children to end up on the street (Kopoka, 2000).

The phenomenon of Street children has come into existence because of the interface between a combination of factors such as industrialization, migration from rural to urban areas, poverty, a lack of opportunities for education, family problems, cruelty and abuse, neglect, natural calamities (Khan and Hesketh, n.d).

The adverse family situation such as the death of parents, the presence of stepmothers and domestic violence were the leading factors for children leaving home, while poor household, economic condition and the desire for modern consumerism were the other important reasons. Street children in Makeevka report their reasons for escaping to the street life are due to their family violence, alcoholism and other forms of abusive behavior within their families (Naterer and Godina, 2011:26).

Different writers about street children also point out the two important factors called push and pull factors for the increasing number of street children. Similarly, Ali, Mynck, Shahab, Ushijima (2004) reflected in Besnet (2010), the common push and pull factors that bring children to the street. The Push factors are those problem especially family situation which make home life unattractive which may include poverty, big family size, family violence, abuse, school abandonment and inadequate parental guidance (Graham, 2011), while pull factors are those factors which make street life very attractive and encourage children to leave home and includes desire for independence, financial security, enthusiasm and glamour of living in cities, and some hope of raising ones standard of living (Besnet, 2010).

II. FAMILY PROBLEM AND STREET CHILDREN

The family is the primary institution responsible to fulfill the basic needs of their children including providing security, love, food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and entertainments. CRC (1990), convinced that the family as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all their family members and particularly children, should afford the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community. Moreover, the family socializes children in their own culture and passes this culture to them through the socialization process. The family is considered as the reference point for the construction of children's norm,

for shaping their personality and for the direction they take in their community life (Shaefer, 2003).

The family situation and the relations within a family are, thus, important elements in shaping the features of the child's life. Often, the phenomenon of street children is reversely proportional to the prevalence of normal relations within the family. A study done by UNICEF examined the reasons why children may leave the family and found that some of the children left their family because of ill-treatment by their fathers or stepfathers or after the death of one or both parents. Others decided to leave in order to avoid parental control or because of the dire economic situation of the family. Still others left simply because they want to enjoy more independence from their families (UNICEF, no. d: 18).

Many families have broken up and children left to fend for themselves. As a result of family disintegration the proportion of the number street children in urban areas has reached alarming proportions (Dinku, 2005). Many families are also increasingly characterized by absence of parents, lack of communication between parents and children, alcoholism and domestic violence. Many children run away to the streets to avoid violence and abuse in the family (Kopoka, 2000:9).

Together with the high rate of family disintegration, children and parents reported physical abuse as a major factor pushing children away from home. Domestic violence especially physical and sexual abuses of children were among the main reasons why a large number of children run away from their homes and end up on streets (Bibars, 1998:2002). Parental illness (physical and mental), and drug and alcohol use among the fathers and stepfathers were considered as precipitating factors for family disruption. Children frequently used drugs, and said that drugs were easily obtained within the neighborhood and that parents usually punish their addicted children which in turn forces children to move away from the home (Abdelgalil, Gurgel, Theobald, Cuevas, 2004).

Family violence especially step fathers or step mothers maltreatment leads children to become or end in street. Extreme physical abuse in the home promotes rebellious attitudes among many adolescents, and the children begin to perceive leaving the family as an alternative for their dependence and emancipation from their parents' abusive behavior (Boakye-Boaten, 2006). MOLSA (2005) also argued all forms of violence against children including physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect and maltreatment, deprivation and exploitation, including sexual abuse which leads children to leave their home and become on street.

The size of the family also has a strong impact on the family's economic situation, and the emotional ties families have for their children decreases as the size of the family increases. Families with more children incur more costs and require more efforts in terms of provision of care and large family size have low emotional attachment for their children. Often poor families are unable to assume complete responsibility for raising and supporting their children if there are many. Large families provide

less time, care, and money for each single child. When the father is working all day to earn enough to cover the basic needs of his family, children become deprived of their father's attention and affection, and even from his mere physical presence. A study on street children in the Philippines indicated that most street children come from large families with an average size of 6 to 10 members (UNICEF, no. d: 18). Another important dimension worthy of explication is some contradictions in the literature concerning street children and attachment to their families. As it is stated earlier, some scholars assert that children who have had little attachment to their primary giver have higher potential to leave their homes for the streets and vice versa. Different studies reflect that street children are not always seen as abandoned or without any family support. From their studies in Sudan and Ethiopia, children looked to the streets as an avenue to fulfill their basic needs (Boakye-Boaten 2006).

III. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Area

This study was conducted in Nekemte town, which is found in western Oromia of East Wollega Zone, and 331km away from the capital city of the country. The town is the capital of Eastern Wollega zone with a total population of 76,817 of which 39,167 are males while the remaining 37, 650 are females (CSA 2008). Nekemte has an altitude of 2045 meters above sea level and is considered to have a temperate climate. Nekemte has a latitude and longitude of 9°5'N 36°33'E 9.083°N 36.55°E and an elevation of 2,088 meters. The town is the center of commerce for western part of Oromia region. It is found at the junction point of the roads connecting different Oromia zones and regional states of the country, namely, Nekemte-Gimbi- Assosa, Nekemte- Gimbi-Dembi Dolo, Nekemte-Badele-Jimma, and Nekemte-Addis Ababa and Nekemte-Bure-Bahardar, which render the town the opportunity of accommodating tremendous travelers per day for different purposes (Tahir,2009).

Study Design

The study has employed a cross-sectional survey research design. The researcher employed mixed approach method in which both qualitative and quantitative aspects of information were gathered. Mixed research methodology was selected for appropriate collection of data and for the validity of the research. The researcher used quantitative method to collect data which needs quantification especially socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. In addition to this, the use of quantitative method helps the researcher to make wider the sample size of the study which in turn increases the depth of the information. The larger the size of the sample would be the more precise and better to make estimation for the larger population size (Polland, 2005). In addition to this, Yount (2006) also argued as the larger the sample size, the better it represents the population. While qualitative method is used to collect the data which is qualitative in form. The use of multiple method in investigating social

problems provide for a diversity of viewpoints, expose researchers to different and wider bodies of knowledge, and enable them to investigate their subject matter in a more complete manner (Slonim-Nevo and Nevo, 2009).
Study Population

The population size of this study would be the total number of street children in Nekemte town, concerned bodies of both governmental and non-governmental organization working with children and community member of Nekemte town.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Since it is difficult to get the sampling frame of the subjects under study due to the nature of subjects' life, mobility and day to day addition of subjects, the researcher decided to use non-probability sampling. From non-probability sampling, the researcher employed availability-sampling technique for street children living in Nekemte Town. In this sampling technique, availability sampling is used due to the nature of the subjects' mobility from one area to other parts of the town. For the selection of concerned bodies of governmental and non-governmental organization working with children as a result of their direct work with children and key informants of the town who are knowledgeable about the problem, purposive sampling technique were used. The three potential areas were also selected purposively by observing the concentration of street children in the town and collecting information from the community; where the children are highly concentrated. Based on what by the researcher observed and identified three potential areas from which information gathered from the community. The following areas were selected: Bus station, around Miriam Church and 2nd Street of Nekemte town.

Since there is no previous study done on subjects under study in study area and there is no accurate figure, the researcher estimates the number of respondents or sample size to be included in this study. Curry (1984) revealed in the work of Yount (2006) as rule of thumb is very important in sample size estimation when there is no research done on the subjects and no accurate figure about the subjects which pointed out as 10 % is needed for the population ranging from 101 to 1,000. Gay (1987) cited in the work of Yount (2006) suggests that 10% of large populations and 20% of small populations as minimums for sample size. In other way Sudman (1976) also suggests that in survey research, a minimum of 100 subjects suggested in each major subgroup and 20 to 50 in each minor subgroup. Then by applying rule of thumb 100 street children and other 7 people from different organization and community members were selected and participated in this study.

Sources of Data

In order to generate relevant and detailed information for this study, the researcher used both primary and secondary data sources. While secondary data were compiled from sources such as books, journals, articles

and internet, primary data were gathered from the subjects of the study.

IV. INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES OF DATA COLLECTION

Instruments of Data Collection

To obtain reliable and valid information, data were collected through different data collecting instruments. For the purpose of this study, questionnaire, in-depth interview and focus group discussion item were developed by assessing different literatures concerning the problem.

The instruments were first developed in English language and then, as a majority of respondents speak and write Afan Oromo, and as it is also the official language of the region, the instruments were translated in to the local language –Afan Oromo to make it easily understandable to the respondents. To insure easily understandable nature of instruments and to make corrections, if any, a pilot study was done before the actual data collection done on twelve (12) street children for the questionnaire instrument. The pretest helped the researcher in modification and addition of some questions. Three basic instruments were used in the process of gathering the necessary data for the study.

Data Collection Procedure

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were employed for the collection of data on contributing factors, the life condition and other related information concerning street children of Nekemte town. The researcher intended to use this combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods because of their complementary and they compensate one another's bias. The researcher employed the following instruments for the collection of detailed and relevant information:

The researcher employed close ended and open-end questionnaires, in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were only for street children living in Nekemte Town. Questionnaires were filled only by the respondents (street children) but, the interviews took the form of a face-to-face conversation which was used to collect the data from street children, government and non-governmental organization and the key informants. Finally, street children were administered the questionnaire with the assistance researchers and other person from government office who cooperated the researcher, while interview and FGD were made only by researcher and assistant researcher. Besides, the researcher was personally available and made all the necessary efforts to clarify the purpose of the questionnaire as well as to avoid mistakes and minimizes the possible misunderstandings.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Since the researcher used mixed method, the information were analyzed and interpreted by using both quantitative and qualitative forms of data analysis. The quantitative data was analyzed by using simple (descriptive) statistics. Once the data have been collected, they were entered and processed using SPSS version 16.0 statistical software package for analysis. This quantitative data were analyzed by using simple statistics including tables, percentage, and frequencies as the main tools for summarizing the data, and supported by the data collected through open-ended questionnaire. While the qualitative data was analyzed by carefully reviewing and examining field notes from focus group discussions and in-depth interview. The information gathered through qualitative instruments categorized according to their similarity in themes and analyzed by narrating, quotation of respondent's information and making explanation in words, textual and structural description of the experience of the participants.

Analysis and Discussion of the Finding

The primary data collected was analyzed and interpreted of by using different instruments. A total of one hundred seven (107) respondents were included in this study of which one hundred (100) of the respondents were from the children working and living on the street and the remaining seven (7) of the respondents were from different concerned bodies of governmental, non-governmental and other key informant of the community.

Marital Status and Family situation of Street Children's Family

Marital Status of Street Children's Family

In this study the marital status of street children's family were asked in order to have insight and shows linkage between family marital status and the degree of street children coming to the street. Different literature shows as the family marital status is determinant factor by pushing children to end up on street.

Table 1: Marital Status of Street Children's Family

Street Children's Family	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital status of the Family	Living together	26	41.9 %
	Divorced	11	17.7 %
	Separated	8	13 %
	Remained	10	12.9 %
	Others*	7	11.3 %

Source: Filed survey, 2012

Others*: implies those who lost both of their biological parents

The above table shows the result of data collected in relation to street children's family marital status. The table revealed that 41.9 % of the children's families are living together, 17.7 % of the children's families are divorced, 13 % of street children's families were separated parents, 12.9 % of street children's families were remarried and the remaining 11.3 % of them were children whose parents were dead. As it was observe from the above data more than half of the children were children whose parents are not living together due to different reason which might be the casual factors for the coming of the children to the street and which shows as

there is high linkage between family marital status problem and the coming of children to the street.

Family Situation of Street Children's Family

In this study family situation of street children were asked in order to have certain understanding about the family situation like death of one or both parents and have an impact on children and to identify family problem as the cause for end up of children to the street. Different literature shows as family situation is a determinant factor by pushing children to end up on street.

Table2: Survival of Street Children's Biological Parents

Survival of Street Parents	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Is your father and mother both alive?	Yes	33	53.2 %
	No	29	46.8 %
Which one of your family dead?	Father	17	27.4 %
	Mother	7	11.3 %
	Both	5	8.1 %
With whom you are living before coming to street?	Father and step mother	7	11.3 %
	Mother and step father	3	4.8%
	Father	2	3.2 %
	Mother	13	21 %
	Others*	4	6.5 %
If you are living with one of steps, is there abuse from them?	Yes	16	25.8 %
	No	13	21%

Source: Filed survey, 2012

Others* implies who lived with sibling and other relatives before coming to the street

Regarding the family situation of street children in the study area, more than half (53.2%) of the children's families are both living together. The remaining 46.8% of the children lost either both or one of their parents. From this 46.8 % of the respondents 27.4 % had lost their father, 11.3 % of them lost their mother while the remaining 8.1 % of the children had lost both of their biological parents. As a result of loss either or both parents 11.3 % of the children were lived with their father and step mothers before coming to the street, 4.8 % of them were lived with their mother and step father which might initiate the condition for the children to come to the street, 3.2 % of them were lived with their father, 21 % were lived with their mother and 6.5 % of them were lived either with their siblings or other relatives. As the a result of losing one or both of their parents 25.8% the children responded as there was abuse from their family or the steps which implies loss of families and living with step parents was a causal factor pushing children to come to the street.

One respondent who was a 16 years old and working on a street as a shoeshine responded how he came to the street as follows. My father dead while I was 9 years old and then my mother married to another husband, but her husband didn't treat me as I am his wife's child. He didn't want my mother to pay anything for my school and even he did not want to see me in his compound. Then, after I lived with them for three (3) years as a solution my uncle calls me to Nekemte Town to live with him. But economically he cannot afford all the things for me. What I got from him is psychological relief. Here I am working and supporting myself which is a better life than the previous one I experienced.

Those children responded as there were abuses from their families or steps point out as there are different forms of abuses which includes as the children were not properly treated with their either of the steps and step mother denies food. The children faced many problems like as they were obligated by their father to drop out from their schools by hearing false information from step mothers, there was no provision of basic needs for survival, conflict of family members, labor exploitation, verbal abuse and criticism on what the children performed.

As one of the experts of Women and Children Office Affair of the town responded the problem of these children is more from the abusive parents. Even the increments of the children on the street were due to abandonment and death of one or both of the parents. She also responded that currently one child came to our office and applied as his father married other wife due to the death of the child's mother and made all things reversed from the previous situation. His father obliged him not go to school and even latter on his father burned his text book and other education material.

In general, as these street children stated the ways they passed through were not conducive. Both biological and step parents played a lot on them which initiated them to come to the street.

One respondent who was 15 years old participated in interview and stayed for six (6) month on the street responded what forces him to come to the street. As this street child stated I forced to end up on the street from the abuse of my biological mother. Usually she abuse me physically (she beat me), but one day she sent me to fetch

water and I stayed there to swim. While I turn back to home she beat very badly and leads me to lost one of my teeth. Then I decided to leave home and come to the street.

But in contrast to the above information, 21 % of the street children revealed as there was no abuse from steps which reflect the problem of their coming to the street was not abuse rather it might be economic, attraction to street life, peer pressure or death of their families.

As far as the situation of the family was concerned whether they were lived with the step father/mother or their family decided to stay single, the children were lived with one of the their parents, it was disastrous and have both economic and social problem on the life the children. Children lived with their steps were highly abused and those who lived with one of their parents were lived in difficulties like economic crises which enforces them to the street.

Sibling Situation of Street Children

The study also aimed to ask questions street children about their sibling situation especially the number of their sibling which helps to know the family size and make linkage with its impact, the presence of other street sibling

and his/her influence on other sibling for the enforcement of children to come to the street.

Regarding sibling situation, from the total number of the respondents 37.1 % of them had 1-3 siblings, the majority of the sibling that means 44.9 % of the respondents had siblings of 4-6 which implies as there is linkage between family size and its impact to force children to the street. The others 19.4 % of the children had 7 and greater than 7 siblings while only 1.6 % of the respondents did not know how many siblings he/she had. So, the study revealed that the majority of the children were with large family sizes which have its own impact on the economy of their families, the social relation and the emotional attachments families have with their children and which in turn raises problems between families.

From the total respondents only 45.2 % of the children had street siblings from which more than half (25.8%) of the children who had street siblings point out as there is the influence of their sibling to be pushed to the street. This shows us the way their family's behaving is a determinant factor on the life of the other member to be socialized in proper manner or not. While 54.8 % of them do not have street sibling.

Table3: Sibling Situation of Street Children

Sibling Situation of Street Children	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How many siblings do you have?	1-3	23	37.1
	4-6	26	44.9%
	>7	12	19.4%
	I did not know	1	1.6%
What was your age while you left your family for street?	<5	15	24.2%
	6-8	14	22.6%
	9-11	15	24.2%
	12-14	17	27.2%
	15-18	1	1.6%
Have you any street sibling?	Yes	28	45.2%
	No	34	54.8%
If you have street sibling, do you think that his/her behavior influence you to come to street?	Yes	16	25.8%
	No	12	19.4%

Source: Filed survey, 2012

*Abuse of Street Children and the Cause for the abusive Behavior**Abuse of Street Children*

One of the problems that children faced while living with their families or guardian or others were abusive behavior. Different body of the communities including parents, police, other street children and etc abuses street children in different ways. The families of children made mistreatment on their children as a result of different factors including being either step father or mother, alcoholic behavior, conflict within the family and the like. Therefore, such abusive behavior forces children to leave their family and home to come to the street. As a result, street children were asked whether they were abused or not and by whom they were abused.

As the study shows, the majority which means 83.9 % of street children responded as there was abusive behavior on children living with their families or guardians and 16.1 % of street children stated as there was no such abuse from families or guardians.

A17 year old street child interviewed and stated, my mother was dead before six years and I stayed with my father and step mother for five years. I left them due to false report from my step mother as a consequence my father beat me, he verbally abuse me as I am a delinquent and as I did not do nothing for her, and my father obliged me to dropout from my school. Then lastly I left them for the street emotionally considering as an opportunity even though this life is not comfortable.

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that abusive behavior was one of the key factors that lead children to the street

because they responded in such manner due to their experience. As pointed in literature, many children run away to the streets to avoid violence and abuse in the family. It is common to hear that children abused not only verbally and physically but also sexually as they become younger by their guardians which in turn force the children to run to the street (Kopaka, 2000).

Concerning by whom street children are abused, more than half (53.2 %) of street children were responded as they were abused by polices of the town which is followed by 17.7 % were abused by their parents. The remaining 14.5 %, 9.7 % and 4.8 % of the respondents responded as they were abused by local leaders, other street children and local communities. In line with what was explained above by the respondents the main form of abuse experienced by street boys is physical assault. The study done by Veale & Azeb (1992) found that the majority of street boys were attacked frequently, largely by robbers (usually older street boys) and sometimes police (UMP, 2000). In contrast to what was depicted above, street children participated in this study stated even though they were abused by their elder street children, they highly regard polices are the most abuser of the street children in Nekemte Town.

The way street children treated goes in line with what was depicted in CSC (2009). Beating and assaulting experienced by the street children are not limited to those perpetrated by security authorities, but also include violence perpetrated by fellow street children. As this literature shows, street children were broken bones and stabbing were a common occurrence and often result from gang fights, from police beatings and were also sustained while being robbed. Street girls are also physically and sexually victimized by street boys.

Table 4: Abuse and Street Children

Abuse and Street Children	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you think that children face abuse while living with their family/ guardian?	Yes	52	83.9 %
	No	10	16.1 %
If street children are abused, usually by whom?	Local leaders	9	14.5 %
	Police	33	53.2 %
	Other street children	6	9.7 %
	Parents	11	17.7 %
	Other specify	3	4.8 %

Source: Filed survey, 2012

One of the interviewed respondent who was a 17 years old street child girl stated abusive behavior from her family forced her to come in to the street. Her mother dead very early and before her father married step mother she lived three years with her father. As that time her

father made good treatment for her, but after the arrival of step mother things become changed. In addition to his alcoholic addiction she gave him false information about me and he always beat and insults me. Lastly since it became difficult to tolerate his behavior, I decided to

come to this town to work as trader of kolo with the support of my grandmother.

Type of Cause and Causes for the abusive Behavior

In this section the researcher also intended to identify about the types and causes for abusive behavior, then the respondents were asked about causes and types of abusive behavior to be investigated in the study area.

As the table below shows, more than half (56.5 %) of street children were abused verbally by their families or guardians and followed by 40.3 % of the children who were emotionally neglected. The other 38.7 % of the children reported that they were physically abused by their parent while 24.2 % of street children point out that they were abused by denying them food, cloth, education and on other few of the respondents pointed as they were sexually abused.

Table5: Type and Causes for the abusive Behavior

Type and Causes for abusive Behavior	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
If there is abuse from family/ guardian, what type of children face?	Physical abuse	24	38.7 %
	Verbal abuse	35	56.5%
	Emotional neglect	25	40.3 %
	Other	15	24.2 %
If there is abuse from family/ guardian, what is the cause for such abusive behavior?	Alcoholism	23	37.1 %
	Conflict in home	19	30.6 %
	Since they are step father / mother	27	43.5 %
	Unequal treatment of siblings	25	40.3 %

Source: Filed survey, 2012

Regarding the causes, street children were asked questions and responded in the following manner: From the street children participated on the study 43.5% of the respondents stated that abusive behavior were caused as a result of their family were either step father or step mother and followed by unequal treatment among siblings which account for 40.3 %. The other thing was that almost one third (37.1%) of the participants were reported the cause for abusive behavior was alcoholism and the remaining (30.6 %) of the respondents revealed that the cause was from the conflict happened within the family members. The response of street children for their abuse goes in line with what was portrayed in Naterer and Godina (2011) as their reasons for escaping to the street; they refer to family violence, alcoholism and other forms of abusive behavior within their families.

In line with the finding obtained from the children themselves, the office of Women and Children Office justified as the cause is more from their parents due to abusive behavior. As the experts of Women and Children Office Affair of the town responded the problem of these children is more from the abusive parents.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Like that of any other part of the world, street children of Nekemte Town are not supervised and properly socialized by their families which leads them to participate in delinquent acts and to be exposed to high labor exploitation. The nature of their life on the street made them to be denied their basic needs like food, shelter, education, health service, and support from family and proper socializations.

The majority of street children were abused and the abusive behaviors were from their parents due to alcoholism of their families, conflict within the family, false report from either of their steps and emotional neglects. From those street children who responded as they are abused, almost all the children responded as there was unfair treatment and negative attitude from police, elder street children, and community members. These groups of people are highly abusing their right which emanate from their negative attitude about the street children.

Street children who work and live on the streets of Nekemte Town are found to be vulnerable to wide and extreme violations of their rights. They are verbally,

physically and sexually abused by their family members, relatives.

As the finding shows most street children families' economic statuses were not satisfactory. As the data collected from the children revealed, the majorities of the children's families are getting a monthly income of below 530 Ethiopian birr which implies they are living below poverty line and leads the children to the street.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since this article is based on my thesis I would like express my very special thanks to my advisor Dessalegn Negeri (PhD Candidate) and my co-advisor Yared Paulos (MA) for their support, fruitful discussions and constructive criticisms and without whom the successful accomplishment of the thesis would not have been possible.

My most sincere thanks are also expressed to all members of the community of Nekemte Town, its local leaders and all informants who collaborated in this study.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Hatloy A. and Huser A. (2005). Identification of Street Children: Characteristics of Street Children in Bamako and Accra. Allkopi as, Norway.
- [2]. Khan S. and Hesketh T. (2010). Deteriorating situation for street children in Pakistan: a consequence of war. *Arch Dis Child*, UK.
- [3]. Kopoka, A. P. (2000). The Problem of Street Children in Africa: An Ignored Tragedy. Paper Presented at the International Conference on Street Children and Street Children's Health in East Africa, Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania. April 19th - 21st April 2000.
- [4]. Ferguson, M. K. (2006). Responding to Children's Street Working with Alternative Income-Generating Strategies: *International Social Work* 49(6): 705-717, London: SAGE.
- [5]. Besnet P. (2010). The Lost Childhood of Street Children in Nepal. Unpublished thesis submitted to Wichita State University, Nepal. Retrieved January 15, 2012; from <http://soar.wichita.edu/dspace>.
- [6]. Chama B.S. (2008). Brief Note: The Problem of African Orphans and Street Children Affected HIV/AIDS: Making Choices between Community-based and Institutional Care Practices. *International Social Work* 51(3): 410-415. London, Sage
- [7]. Naterer A. and Goddana V. V. (2011). Bomzhi and their subculture: An anthropological study of the Street children subculture in Makeevka, eastern Ukraine: *Childhood* 18(1) 20-38. University of Maribor, Slovenia, SAGE.
- [8]. Dinku Lemessa (2005). Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Displacement: The Case of Displaced Persons in Addis Ababa: *African Study Monographs*, suppl. 29: 193-203.
- [9]. Graham L. M. (2011). Helping the Children of the Streets of Lima, Instituto del Perú Lima
- [10]. Shaefer T. R. (2003). *Sociology* (8th ed.); Mc Graw-Hill Companies, Inc, New York.
- [11]. UNICEF (n.d). Children in the Street: The Palestinian Case
- [12]. Bibars I (1998). Street children in Egypt: from the home to the street to inappropriate corrective institutions: *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Cairo, Egypt: SAGE.
- [13]. Abdelgalil S., Gurge R. G., Theobald S. and Cuevas L. E. (2004). Household and family Characteristics of street children in Aracaju. London, Sage.
- [14]. Boaykye-Boaten, A. (2006). An Examination of the Phenomenon of Street Children in Selected Communities in Accra (Ghana), unpublished dissertation for the degree of Philosophy Ohio University, Retrieved January 15, 2012; from <http://etd.ohiolink.edu/view>.
- [15]. BOLSA (2004). Qorannoo Farreen Nageenyaa Hawaasummaa Wajjira Bulchinsa Magaala Naqamteen Gaggeeffame.
- [16]. Tahir Hasen (2009). Acceptability of provider initiated HIV counseling and testing in pregnant mothers attending ANC at Nekemte town government health facilities East Wollega zone, Nekemte, AAU, Unpublished thesis.
- [17]. CSA (2008). Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census.
- [18]. Pollard J., R. (2005). Essentials of Survey Research and Analysis.
- [19]. Yount R. (2006). Research Design and Statistical Analysis for Christian Ministry. 4th ed.
- [20]. Slonim-Nevo V and Nevo I. (2009). Conflicting Findings in Mixed Methods Research: An Illustration from an Israeli Study on Immigration. *Methods Research Volume 3 Number 2*, pp.109-128. Beer Sheva, Israel, SAGE.
- [21]. Sudman, S. (1976). Applied Sampling. New York: Academic Press.
- [22]. CSC (2009). Street Children in Ethiopia Briefing to the IPU.
- [23]. UMP (2000). Street children and Gangs in African Cities: Guidelines for Local Authorities.
- [24]. Working Paper 18.