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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**ORPHANHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION DROPOUTS:
An exploratory study of the causes and consequences of orphans'
dropping out of primary education in Gweru City, Zimbabwe**

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ABSTRACT

While the issue of primary school dropouts has attracted growing attention in educational research and social policy circles, very few researchers have directed their interests to explore in detail why orphans drop out of primary education and the consequences of such. The work of this thesis is grounded in the data that were generated using qualitative in-depth interviews and field observations in Gweru City, Zimbabwe. A purposively selected sample of 12 respondents was used, which included orphaned dropouts (aged 12-16 years old) and 'other adult actors' (i.e. adults who had prior experiences of working or living with orphans). To extract some of the features based on the data; orphans drop out of primary education due to family-related, community-related, school-related and policy-related factors. The analysis therefore denotes an institutional perspective as it mentions that, dropping out of primary education is as a result of the weakening of the vital institutions (external factors) rather than orphans' independent decisions. Based on the data; dropping out of primary education comes as a process and not as an event. Moreover, the consequences of dropping out of primary education were seen to be grave; street children, child labour, child abuse, teen substance abuse, teen pregnancies, single motherhood, child prostitution, STIs, HIV/AIDS, juvenile delinquency, illiteracy, poverty and a reduced life expectancy. That being the case, the way forward should be to enhance partnerships and to provide universal primary education.

Keywords

Orphanhood, dropout, primary education, parent, school, explore, children, factors, consequences, institution, HIV/AIDS, urban, Zimbabwe.

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ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CBT	Community-Based Targeting
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDC	Children in Difficulty Circumstances
CDES	Career Development and Education Support
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DAAC	District Aids Action Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DSS	Department of Social Services
EFA	Education for All
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
MASO	Midlands Aids Service Organization
MCH	Midlands Children's Home
NPA (OVC)	National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
SARDC	Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre
SCUK	Save the children United Kingdom
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNMDG	United Nations Millennium Development Goals

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In Zimbabwe, education is considered to be the mainstay of all developmental initiatives and activities. Formal education is vital because it produces ‘the leaders of tomorrow’. However, the challenge facing the country is that many children especially orphans are dropping out of primary education. Without basic education; they are less likely to contribute meaningfully towards development. This state of affairs is akin to that of many other developing countries that are plagued by large numbers of orphans. According to revised 2000 estimates from the United States Census Bureau, more than 44 million children in 34 developing nations will likely to have lost one or both parents by 2010, principally due to HIV/AIDS and complicating illnesses (Guarcello et al, 2004: 3).

Even though this thesis is about orphanhood in general, it greatly acknowledges the fact that the creation of orphans is indeed a striking, long term consequence of HIV/AIDS (Mupedziswa, 1998: 97). It has been predicted over the years that HIV/AIDS was creating around 150 000 orphans each year and that by the year 2005, Zimbabwe would have over 1 million children under the age of 15 years orphaned by AIDS (Dhlembeu, 2000: 14). The year 2005 has passed and the number of orphans continues to increase. Before the AIDS pandemic, orphans as a group deserving special attention were virtually unknown in Zimbabwe because the extended family system was still intact (UNICEF/SARDC, 1997: 23), acting as their haven. However, the current scenario is the one where orphans are more vulnerable than ever. Aside from the emotional and psychological effects that losing a parent can have, there is clear evidence that orphaned children are dropping out of school at a higher rate than non-orphaned children (Boler and Carroll, 2003). According to Chirwa (2002); orphanhood is a social and economic process that goes beyond the biological situation entailed in the demise of a parent or both parents.

To show the importance of primary education, many countries in the 1990 Conference on Education for All (EFA) pledged to achieve universal primary education by 2000 (Coffin,

2004).¹ But in 2000, 115 million school-age children were still not in school, 56 percent of them girls and 94 percent were in developing countries, mostly in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (ibid). Today, there are an estimated 40 million African children not in primary school (Mallard, 2006).² For that reason, many developing countries (including Zimbabwe) as per Goal 2 of the UNMDG have pledged to ‘achieve universal primary education’ by the year 2015. Anything less than that achievement will hurt orphans most by perpetuating their social exclusion. Ensuring children’s right to education is a matter of morality, justice and economic sense (UNICEF, 1999: 7). Though the UNCRC and the ACRWC are advocating for the equal and increased participation of all children in education; many orphans in Zimbabwe are unable to complete primary education due to various educational constraints.

This thesis explores in detail why orphans drop out of primary education and the consequences of dropping out, using ‘Grounded Theory’ techniques in analyzing qualitative data. It forms part of on-going efforts to understand why orphans drop out of primary education and how to improve policy responses to the orphaned dropout crisis. The importance of this study is that it contributes to knowledge building. Imminent research projects and studies can also rely on this thesis for reference and comparative purposes. The thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study. Chapter 2 gives a general background of the study. Chapter 3 details the research design and methodology used. Chapter 4 and 5 discusses the main themes that emerged from the data. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study presents another dimension on the subject matter (orphaned school dropouts). Previous researches in Zimbabwe and Gweru in particular have sought to explain the phenomenon using quantitative methods (in terms of dropout rates), and very little has

¹ <http://www.developmentinaction.org/newspages/index/63.php>

² <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2006-04-21-voa48.cfm>

been done in terms of exploring in detail. Therefore, this study hopes to provide that 'missing link'. By using in-depth qualitative interviews, the topic will be understood from a different, but complimentary angle to that of the previous studies. Exploration enables one to uncover the phenomenon and its other dimensions.

The rationale for studying about orphaned dropouts is because of the severe consequences of not finishing school. Education is considered to be a basic child right yet many orphans in Zimbabwe and Gweru in particular are dropping out of primary education due to various reasons related to their specific problems. Primary education has two main purposes; to produce a literate and numerate population that can deal with problems encountered at home and at work, and to serve as a foundation on which further education is built (Odiwour, 2000: 13). Lack of it can lead to the creation of other social problems and social exclusion.³

Whilst the UNMDG envision universal primary education in Zimbabwe, the engulfing orphan situation mainly because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic can derail the goal. It is estimated that approximately 30 percent of all children in Zimbabwe are orphans, over three quarters of whom have been orphaned due to HIV/AIDS (CRS, 2004 cited by Gundersen et al, 2004). The linkage between the progression of HIV/AIDS and the increase in the number of orphans means that even if the problem of AIDS were to go in the foreseeable future, the orphan problem will still be there long afterwards (Kalemba, 2000: 2 cited by Chirwa, 2002). Besides; HIV/AIDS is just one of the several causes of orphanhood, others being occupation related, witchcraft related, maternal causes, road accidents and other illnesses. Even without HIV/AIDS, the percentage of adult mortality would be significantly higher in Zimbabwe because of the dramatic increases in poverty, coupled with the collapse of the health delivery system due to 'brain-drain' (among health personnel) and economic decline.

³ Social exclusion here refers to a scenario when an individual is prevented from participating in any of the key economic, social and political activities in the society in which they live.

The World Bank cited by The United Methodist Church (2006) predicted that the number of primary school pupils in 2010 will shrink by 24% in Zimbabwe.⁴ In light of the well-established direct and indirect benefits from schooling, a decline in school enrolment would have enormous consequences for the future of Zimbabwe as a country (Gundersen et al, 2004). Given the existence of the phenomenon (orphaned primary school dropouts) in Zimbabwe and Gweru City; this thesis is another contribution towards knowledge building on the subject.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of the study is to explore on the factors that influence orphans to drop out of primary education in Gweru City, Zimbabwe. More specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore on the factors that influence orphans to drop out of primary education.
2. Explore on what orphans do as a replacement for primary schooling.
3. Examine and discuss the consequences of dropping out of primary education.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study has been limited to the exploration of the causes and consequences of dropping out of primary education among orphans in Gweru City. However; very little has been said in terms of the responses to the problem. The major limitation of the study has been that of time. Had there been enough time, more orphans would have been interviewed to enhance exploration. More time was needed to identify, obtain consent and recruit orphans who matched the criteria. For that reason, the study ended up utilising more information from '*third parties*' (other adult actors) instead of orphaned dropouts. Furthermore; constant negotiations for 'gatekeeper consent' were time consuming, as well as the use of in-depth interviews and field observations. Another limitation during data generation and data analysis had to do with the translation of a Zimbabwean language (Shona) into English and vice-versa. This was exacerbated by the fact that the data were recorded by way of hand writing in a 'field notebook' instead of

⁴ <http://gbgm-umc.org/health/aidsafrica/zimaims.cfm>

using a tape-recorder. In so doing, there were possibilities of losing the respondents' exact words; thereby failing to grasp the essence of their experiences.

1.5 Operational Definition of Terms and Concepts

Community- refers to the individuals and families living in the same area as the orphan.

Dropout- refers to a person who discontinues primary education for whatever reason. In this study, dropouts are orphans aged between 12-16 years old who had a period of absence from primary school lasting for one month or longer, and they are not enrolled in any school.

Factor- refers to anything that contributes causally to a result. However, this is an elusive concept since the so-called causes may be the effects of other causes.

Formal Education- refers to the transmission of knowledge and skills within an explicit, defined, and structured format for space, time, and material, with set qualifications for teacher and learner (Colletta, 1994). It is characterized by paid teachers performing roles within institutional settings (schools) usually with age-specific groups of students (Silvey, 1982: 73).

Grounded Theory- refers to an approach that insists that theoretical concepts and hypotheses must emerge from the data as it is uncovered in the research process itself (Layder, 1998:18).

Guardian- refers to an adult person who assumes responsibility for an orphan's welfare on a day-to-day basis.

Household- refers to one or more people who share cooking and eating arrangements. The household head is the person primarily responsible for the day-to-day running of the household (Foster et al, 1997). A child-headed household on the other hand refers to a household headed by a child.

Orphan- refers to a child under the age of 18 who has lost either one (single orphan) or both (double orphan) parents due to death. In this study, the age-group of the orphaned respondents was between 12-16 years old. A 'paternal orphan' in this study refers to a child whose biological father is deceased, whilst a 'maternal orphan' is a child whose biological mother is deceased. Orphanhood is a condition of being an orphan.

Primary education- refers to early formal education (after pre-school) that is usually undertaken by pupils aged 6-12 years old. However, it is also common to find pupils who are in their early teen years at primary education level. Primary education in Zimbabwe is from Grade 1 up to Grade 7. This seven year course began in 1969 after a 1966 Education Plan was adopted by the then colonial regime in Zimbabwe (Madzokere, 1995: 178). Primary education is a prerequisite for one to proceed to secondary education and beyond.

Ward- this term is used interchangeably in this study to mean two different things. Firstly, it refers to an orphan who is under a guardian's charge or protection. Secondly, it refers to a territorial division (constituency) into which a city is divided for the purpose of administration.

2 Background Overview of the Study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a concise presentation of the background information. Nonetheless; the theories and other issues related to ‘orphanhood’ and ‘school dropouts’ will be discussed together with the main themes in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively.

2.2 Zimbabwe: An Overview of the Socio-Economic Aspects

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country situated in Southern Africa, covering an area of 390 759 sq km (150 873) sq miles, with a population of 12.9 million people. It is estimated that two thirds (68%) of the population live in the rural areas and the remainder (32%) in urban areas (UNICEF, 2002). The country is currently experiencing one of the world’s worst HIV epidemics, with the overall life expectancy pegged at 35 years for both men and women (DFID, 2006). Though Zimbabwe has abundant natural resources, its economy is at present on the decline. Continued high inflation (over 600% in early 2006) remains a large regressive form of tax on society, hitting the poor hardest (ibid). 56% of the population live on less than US \$1 a day whilst 80% live on less than US \$2 a day (ibid).⁵ In that respect, it is clear that a majority of the Zimbabweans (over 60%) live below the poverty datum line.

The above state of affairs increases the vulnerability of orphans and they become dependent on various social protection programmes.⁶ In Zimbabwe, the following policies and programmes were implemented to ease the vulnerability of orphans; the Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Policy (1999), BEAM (2001), NPA (OVC) (2004) and the Social Welfare Assistance scheme. These are ‘bottom-up’ policies and programmes which also encourage partnerships among various stakeholders. BEAM, through which tuition fee, levy, and examination-fee assistance is provided by the government to OVCs, is aimed at reducing the number of needy children dropping out of school due to economic constraints (Phiri and Webb, 2001). The selection of beneficiaries under

⁵ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/africa/zimbabwe.asp>

⁶ Social Protection Programmes refers to all initiatives that provide income (cash) or consumption (food) transfer to the poor; protect the vulnerable to livelihood risks; or enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised.

BEAM is carried out by community members who are also part of the Community Selection Committees.

2.3 *The Historical Development of Education in Zimbabwe*

Education in Zimbabwe can be understood better by tracing it through the following distinctive epochs; pre-colonial, colonial, post-independence, ESAP and the present state of affairs of HIV/AIDS vis-à-vis economic decline. This argument takes an economic concept of 'path dependence'. Path-dependence exists when the outcome of a process depends on its past history, on the entire sequence of decisions made by agents and resulting outcomes, and not just on contemporary conditions (Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia, 2006). These principles tell us that "history matters" in understanding social sciences (ibid).

In the pre-colonial era, education was to a large extent informal, with adults passing on the norms and values of their society to the younger generation through stories and riddles (Murphree, et al 1975 cited by Madzokere, 1995: 174). Formal education was first introduced to the indigenous people of Zimbabwe by the missionaries before the permanent settlement of the British in Zimbabwe. Those first missionary schools taught basic literacy and numeric skills, as well as religion (Silvey, 1982: 74). On the other hand, the colonial regime created a dual system of education which was discriminatory; with non-Africans participating in academic education whilst the indigenous people were provided with vocational education (Madzokere, 1995: 176). This system created a 'master-servant' relationship in which those with formal education were guaranteed white-collar jobs whilst the uneducated indigenous people provided cheap labour (ibid).

On 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe got independent from British colonial rule. The incoming government sought to redress the inequalities that were created by the previous regime. It was committed to the creation of a socialist state, which was guided by the principles of social justice and equity. In that respect, education was declared a human right, being regarded as a potent tool for social and economic transformation. More schools were constructed under the new socialist-oriented government's 'Growth with Equity' economic blueprint. The new government's commitment towards the provision of

universal education was shown in the fact that it built and established 5500 primary and secondary schools in 6 years, a 220% increase over the pre-independence era (Ose-Hwedie and Bar-on, 1999: 95). That euphoric era of post independence also saw the increase in primary school enrolments since primary education was made free. However, schools fees were later reintroduced in urban areas

Another important era to take note of when analyzing about Zimbabwe's socio-economic history is the ESAP era. In October 1990, Zimbabwe instituted ESAP which saw the government reducing expenditure on education and introducing 'user fees'. ESAP negatively affected not only the ordinary people but the urban children since there was no longer free primary education in urban areas. Whereas there was a drop in urban primary school enrolment, there was an increase in enrolments in rural primary schools because primary education was still free in rural schools (Madzokere, 1995: 186). Furthermore, the ESAP era brought with it the erosion of teachers' salaries and that affected their morale, thereby causing a 'brain drain' to neighbouring countries (ibid).

Having identified these distinctive historical phases; it is also important to note that the current situation in Zimbabwe signify a serious crisis because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, accompanied by economic decline.

2.4 If education is the answer, what is the question?

The continued globalization of economic activities is of major significance for the prosperity or otherwise of the world's population (Michie, 2003). According to Bauman (2002: 178); no locality is free any more to proceed with its own agenda without reckoning with the elusive and recondite 'global finance' and 'global markets', while everything done locally may have global effects. The interconnectedness of the world has brought with it many benefits, as well as many challenges. One challenge is that, most of the world's poor and uneducated people have no full access to the benefits and opportunities brought about by globalization. Notably, the growing inequalities (e.g. between the rich and the poor, men and women) have raised more questions than answers as to what kind of strategies should be employed to eradicate poverty and to equitably re-distribute the world's resources? The UNMDG are the recent strategies aimed to address

the many problems of the world. However; to achieve those goals, the importance of education cannot go unnoticed. As it reaches economically and socially deprived groups, the transformation will be egalitarian (Hallak 1990: 49).

The main purpose of primary education is to prepare children for the future; to participate fully in the social, political and economic well being of the nation. It aims to produce a literate and numerate population. From a scientific argument, research demonstrates that the early years are critical in the development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour (UNICEF, 1999: 7). As schooling increases in duration, traditional orientations, ways of thinking, and lifestyles are recast and displaced by universalistic forms of learning and teaching, as well as universalistic forms of learning and language (Beck, 1992: 93). However, this does not essentially denote universal citizenship, but it shows that education is a vital tool towards one's participation and self-discovery in an increasingly 'borderless' world.

From an economic argument, society also benefits economically by developing an individual who will in most cases become economically productive and independent (UNICEF, 1999: 7). Success at school increases the chances for an individual to get a well paying job, thus escaping from poverty. In Foster's view, Third World children enter school and compete so hard to remain in the system because school is the only gateway into the modern sector of the economy (Foster, 1965 cited by Silvey, 1982: 79). The educated person in this sense becomes the producer of his or her own labour situation, and in this way, of his or her own social biography (Beck, 1992: 93). Moreover; formal education does not only benefit the individual but the nation as a whole. Education is largely a broad preparation for future human resources needs and a linchpin of development. Given the current 'brain-drain' affecting most African countries, it is advantageous to have many educated people so as to ease human resources shortages especially in the social services sector. These and other characteristics of education are dimensions of development.

3 Research Methodology and Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion about how the research was conducted. Included in the discussion are the following issues; research design, choice of methodology, site selection, sampling procedures, problems encountered during fieldwork, data-generating techniques, ethical considerations and data analysis. Terms like ‘participant’, ‘interviewee’ and ‘respondent’ will be used interchangeably to refer to the people who were interviewed. To some extent, this study represents a mixture of both naturalism and constructivism as it acknowledges the important roles played by both the respondents and the interviewer in the generation of hypotheses.

3.2 Research Design

Research design simply refers to the plan employed to investigate the problem under study and to administer the research. According to Brewerton and Millward (2001: 52); the design of the study pertains to the strategy or schedule used to generate and analyse data, and from which conclusions are drawn. Prior fieldwork, a research proposal was made, so as to give the study a sense of direction. However, that did not imply rigidity. The research was conducted with an ‘open’ but not ‘empty’ mindset that was always ready to alter the focus of the study to suit the context, and not vice-versa. As Glesne (2006: 5) argues; a qualitative researcher tends to begin with an exploratory, open mindset to the variety of perspectives and issues that may arise. In order to manage and balance preconceived notions with emergent research issues, it was therefore important to be flexible and open. To take the words of Schratz and Walker (1995: 1);

In qualitative research more than in any kind of research, we are all beginners every time we start a new project; our experience is not always as useful as we hope it will be (Schratz and Walker, 1995:1)

3.2.1 The rationale for using qualitative research methods

The decision to conduct a qualitative study was mainly influenced by the exploratory nature of the study. Qualitative research offers the opportunity to ‘unpack’ issues, to see what they are about or what lies inside, and to explore how they are understood by those

concerned with them (Ritchie, 2003: 27). In this study; orphaned primary school dropouts and ‘other adult actors’ were interviewed. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999: 2), qualitative researchers are intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions.

In order to get a holistic picture regarding ‘orphanhood’ and ‘dropout’, the respondents were observed and interviewed in their natural settings (their homes, workplaces and any other places where they carried out their daily activities). According to Hull (2005), the great strength of qualitative research is its “naturalism”; its intimacy with real people in real situations, its concern for understanding human beings as they act in the course of their daily lives. It enables one to have a holistic description of events, occurring in natural settings as opposed to quantitative research in which selected, pre-defined variables are studied.

Reliability and validity were not overlooked in this study. To ensure reliability, the following skills and attributes were utilized; empathetic listening, accurate recording (writing) of interviews and field observations, critical self-awareness and teamwork (seeking feedback from other researchers). Furthermore, the study was kept on track by the constant use of an ‘*aide memoire*’; ‘*To what extent does the data support my research objectives?*’ These and other undertakings enhanced the reliability and validity of the study.

3.2.2 Site selection

The study was conducted in the city of Gweru. Centrally situated, Gweru is the fourth largest city in Zimbabwe and the administrative capital of the Midlands Province. It has over 40 industrial establishments and it houses approximately 400,000 inhabitants. In terms of primary education, it has 22 primary schools. Also, the city has 17 wards into which different residential suburbs fall under; as either, low-density (sparsely populated), medium-density (fairly populated) or high-density (densely populated) areas. Gweru city was chosen because most people in the area understood the languages that were used to conduct interviews. Moreover, the study area has many organizations which run orphan-

care programmes such as MASO, CDES, Gweru Municipal, MCH, Red Cross, DAAC, and DSS. In part, the existence of these organizations serves to confirm the occurrence of orphanhood in the area.

3.2.3 Sampling Procedures

Sampling is an important aspect of inquiry. We make judgments about people, places and things on the basis of fragmentary evidence (Robson, 1993: 135). Similarly, this study used a relatively small and purposively selected sample. The logic and power of purposeful sampling is that it leads to selecting 'information-rich' cases on the basis of salient criteria (Patton, 2002 cited by Glesne 2006: 34). In that way, it enables one to have a detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which he/she wishes to study (Ritchie et al, 2003: 78).

In a typical 'theoretical sampling' fashion; the decision concerning sample size was largely made in the field as opposed to a predetermined sample. According to Ritchie et al (2003: 107), theoretical sampling is a particular type of purposive sampling in which units are selected specifically on the basis of their contribution to theory. Initially, the intention was to interview eight respondents. However, the final sample ended up being that of twelve respondents. Upon inquiring and asking the 'local' people (about relevant respondents); the following people were added to the initial study sample, a Municipal employee, an FBO Employee, a Ministry of Education Employee and a Guardian of orphans.

The criteria that was used to purposively select the study sample was based on an array of factors like 'demographic' characteristics (age of orphans, 12-16 years old), 'circumstances' of orphans (primary school dropouts) and the 'experiences' of other adult actors. The rationale for deciding on a sample like that was because the 'other actors' had some in-depth knowledge and experiences regarding the problem under study. They proved to be a 'rich' source of information, given their abilities to give examples of cases, connect events and to reflect on those events and cases. What a way to generate data!

It would have been a good thing to have more orphaned dropouts to talk to. Given their young age, ethical dilemmas and a limited study time-frame; the study sample was therefore broadened to include 'other adult actors' who had some experience of working or living with orphaned dropouts. Only four orphaned school dropouts were interviewed, out of the twelve respondents. These were recruited using the help of a key informant (Community Volunteer) and other leads as well. All in all, a total of twelve respondents were interviewed as follows; 4 orphaned primary school dropouts (2 boys and 2 girls), a Primary School Teacher, FBO Employee, Municipal Employee, NGO Employee, Community Volunteer, Ministry of Education Employee, Social Worker, and a Guardian of orphans.

The chief advantage of having a diverse sample as the one above is that it optimizes the chances of identifying the full range of factors or features that are associated with primary education dropping out. As noted by Ritchie et al (2003: 107); purposive samples are designed to be as diverse as possible, including all key groups and constituencies, and units that are selected on the basis of "symbolic representation", because they hold a characteristic that is known or expected to be salient to the research study. Where there are many possible experiences of a phenomenon, it is important to talk to people representing a wide range of views and situations to build up a broad understanding of the topic (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 109).

Before interviewing the study participants, the consent of gatekeepers were sought by constantly negotiating for access. As postulated by Patton (1980), entry into the field involves two separate parts; negotiation with the gatekeepers about the nature of the fieldwork to be done and the actual physical entry into the field setting to begin data generation. The gatekeepers were informed that the study was an academic one.

3.3 Data Generating Techniques

3.3.1 Primary Data

3.3.1.1 In-depth interviews

In order to generate data, in-depth interviews were relied upon. These were conducted using the aid of an interview-guide. The interview guide had an outline of the topics or issues that were covered during the interviews. That interview guide helped a lot to keep the research 'on track', without deviating from the main research objectives. However, that did not negate flexibility and openness during the interviews. The advantage of using in-depth interviews was that they enabled us to talk freely, since there were no specifically framed questions and order to be strictly followed. The interviews were not a "question and answer" type but an 'invitation' to the respondents to tell their own stories, with minimal interruptions. These 'conversation like' interviews enhanced the 'unlimited' exploration of interesting, unexpected ideas or themes that were raised by participants (Sewell, 2005). As some respondents began to make generalizations during the interviews, they were asked to give specific examples from their experiences. In that way, speculations were minimised.

By using in-depth interviews, the respondents' opinions and their lived experiences were captured through verbal and non-verbal interaction. Interaction acknowledges the fact that respondents are not so much repositories of knowledge as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 114). In order to obtain information from the 'horse's mouth', orphaned dropouts were interviewed, as well as 'other adult actors'. According to Mishna et al (2004: 451); in-depth interviewing provides an opportunity to tap into the richness of children's thoughts and feelings about themselves, their environments and the world in general.

In carrying out the interviews, language was not a major problem as all the respondents understood Shona (a local language) and English. Each of the interviews took about 45 minutes. The interviews were not hurriedly conducted since the purpose of the study was to explore in depth. In some instances, prior arrangements were made with the respondents so as to set aside suitable times and venues for interviews. For both orphans

and adult respondents, the interviews were conducted in places where they felt more comfortable such as their homes, offices and any other places that they chose.

Worth noting is the fact that the interviews were recorded by way of writing in a notebook instead of using a tape recorder. Despite the assurances given to them, most of the respondents were not comfortable and ready to be interviewed face-to-face in front of a tape recorder. They opted to be rather 'safe' than to be tape-recorded by a 'stranger'. In order to ease those discomforts among the interviewees and to maintain consistency in data generation, the interviews were recorded (handwritten) in a notebook. To keep pace with what they said, a short hand-writing was used. Upon recording the interviews in a notebook, they were typed in a computer and printed as transcripts for data analysis.

On the other hand, in-depth interviews had their own challenges too. They proved to be time consuming and tiresome. In some instances, the interviews were long enough that we even became fatigued. The other problem that was encountered whilst carrying out in-depth interviews was that of interruptions. Since the interviews were conducted in respondents' natural environments, some of their colleagues, clients and customers interrupted the interviews.

3.3.1.2 Field Observation

Field observation was used as a complimentary method to in-depth interviews. Direct observation of orphans' physical conditions, health situation, their home environment, and dressing enhanced the exploration of the phenomenon under study. Children living in the streets of Gweru were also observed whilst carrying out their daily activities. Some of them were even seen whilst searching for and eating food from litter bins. These and other observable behaviours and circumstances gave a holistic picture of the phenomenon. Combining observation and interviews is a very effective way of finding out what people do in particular contexts, the routines and interaction patterns of their everyday lives (Darlington and Scott, 2002). Observing the setting is also an effective way of familiarizing with it, thereby making it easier to establish rapport and to ask relevant questions during the interviews. In that way, methodological triangulation proved to be valuable.

3.3.2 Secondary Data: Literature Review

Though this study is empirically rooted, it is not literature blind. Other secondary sources of data were reviewed to enable the discussion of the major themes. Most of the literatures that were reviewed during and after fieldwork included some published and unpublished government policy documents, programme documents, journals, newspapers, books, internet publications, and research documents.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are part and parcel of any social science research. As put forward by Kvale, 1996 cited by Ryen (2004: 231); ethics is not restricted to fieldwork, but to all stages in the research process including (field relations and) writing up of the final report. Professional research ethics ensures that researchers have a responsibility towards other humans and their society; and that distinguishes them from journalists and spies (Erikson, 1967 cited by Ryen, 2004: 231). Similarly, this study was conducted in consideration of the following ethical issues; informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and protection of participants from harm.

Prior to interviewing all the respondents, they were informed about; the purpose of the research; the reasons why they were selected; and the expected duration of the interviews. For orphans, written requests for consent were issued to their guardians for them to either approve or disapprove their participation. In some instances, guardian consent was obtained verbally instead of a written one. However, consent did not only end at guardian approval but also the concerned orphans were consulted about their willingness to participate in the interviews. Ondrusek et al, 1998 cited by Mishna et al (2004: 454) similarly found that children who were over nine years of age demonstrated that they understood key elements of consent such as harms and benefits and the right to withdraw, whereas those who were younger did not.

In addition to informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study by the use of pseudonyms. As argued by Ryen (2004: 233), the researcher is obligated to protect the participants' identities, names of places, and the

location. Since some of the orphaned respondents disclosed hurtful events through a sense of alliance, it was vital to maintain their confidentiality and anonymity.

Also, the concepts 'orphan' and 'dropout' were used in this study for academic purposes only (to explore the phenomena) and not to further their (orphaned school dropouts) stigmatization and discrimination in society. In doing so, empathy and honesty were utilised as much as possible. According to Ryen (2004: 235); fieldwork is an arena where trust, empathy, rapport and ethics are closely linked. To ensure that the interviewed children were not stressed or fatigued by the process, the duration of the interviews were reduced whenever necessary. Furthermore, those orphans were not coerced to discuss at length about emotionally sensitive issues which would cause discomforts to them.

3.5 Data Analysis

It is commonly said that; *'If you do not know what you are looking for; it is difficult to find it'*. Having generated the data from the field; they had to be interpreted and analyzed. The process of data analysis is described here by Glesne (2006: 147) in the following words;

Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned. Working with the data, you describe, create explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories, and link your story to other stories (Glesne, 2006: 147).

Though there is no one best way of analyzing qualitative data; this study preferred to use some elements of 'Grounded Theory' which included the following; reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews, examining the interviews for themes, coding, building analytic categories and constant comparisons (Fyelling and Sandvin 1999: 145). As noted by Borgatti (2005); the basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read (and re-read) a textual database (such as a corpus of field notes) and "discover" or label variables (called categories, concepts and properties) and their interrelationships. This approach makes it possible to reduce and systematically work with the data; hence, a data-led activity (Tesch, 1990). Though the data were segmented and divided into meaningful

units (coding), their connection to the whole (main interviews) were maintained. The following Grounded Theory techniques were utilised for analysis; *'open coding'*, *'axial coding'* and *'selective coding'* respectively.

3.5.1 Open Coding

According to Borgatti (2005), open coding is the part of analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomena found in the text. Coming from the field with large chunks of raw data, there was a need to engage into some form of a dialogue with them. The reason for doing that is because raw data do not speak for themselves (Robson, 1993: 370). In order to get familiar with the data, all transcribed interviews were constantly read and re-read on an equal basis. The process started with the opening up of the data for access by going through the interview transcripts and field notes word by word and sentence by sentence. This dissection of textual data proved to be valuable in the quest to understand the data. In each line, sentence or paragraph, it was constantly asked; *"What is going on here? What is being referenced here?"*

However; after some prolonged engagement with the textual data, some segments of texts were placed into categories and thematic areas for data reduction purposes and interpretation. In some instances, 'in vivo labels' were used for naming purposes. These are labels taken from the respondents' own words and they are embedded in the text. During open coding, categories like "family background", "property grabbing", and "educational costs" among others were created. In order to refine and understand those categories, some interesting issues about them were written in a memo book. A memo, according to Glaser, 1978 cited by Robson (1993: 386) is the theorizing write up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding. By writing memos, it was possible to reflect and develop analytic thoughts as they occurred, up to the writing of the report.

3.5.2 Axial Coding

Theory construction does not happen by just naming and classifying what is there. There is need to understand the patterns, the recurrences, and the whys (Miles and Huberman cited by Ritchie et al, 2003: 205). Having made the categories, it was important to relate

them to each other, via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking (Borgatti, 2005). Strauss and Corbin (1990) noted that, researchers using grounded theory are unafraid to draw on their own experiences when analyzing materials because they realize that these become the foundations for making comparisons and discovering properties and dimensions. The rationale for making comparisons was to find the links and relationships between the categories. For example, on the category “property grabbing”, the aim was to find out about its other properties and dimensions, hence the following questions were raised;

- What kind of property is grabbed?
- Whose property is grabbed?
- Who grabs that property?
- What is the basis for that behaviour of property grabbing?

In that way, the sub-categories were developed and compared against one another. The variations that came up after comparing the sub-categories were useful in understanding the phenomenon in depth, thus hypotheses generation.

3.5.3 Selective Coding

Selective coding is the process of choosing one category to be the core category, and relating all the other categories to that category (Borgatti, 2005). Using the selective coding, it was made easier to form a single storyline around which everything was covered. Coming up with a key category was influenced by the constant appearance and reappearance of that particular category in the text. All the other categories and sub-categories were systematically compared against that key category. Selective coding is about finding the driver that impels the story forward (ibid). Having formed the storyline, it was reported using direct quotes from the interview transcripts. Reporting the findings is an important procedural part of data analysis (Glesne, 2006: 148). The next Chapters 4 and 5 presents the main themes that emerged from the data by way of interpretation.

4 Factors Leading to Orphaned School Dropouts

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses about the factors that influence orphans to drop out of primary education. As the data shows; orphans drop out of primary education due to the factors related to the family, the community, the school and to policy. The analysis presented in this Chapter and the next one is an outcome of data interpretation, literature review and some personal critical reflections.

4.2 Brief Description of the study respondents

As shown earlier, eight adults and four orphaned dropouts were interviewed. The following pseudonyms are used to refer to the orphaned respondents; Simbarashe, Tafara, Betty, and Makanaka. Simbarashe (male) is a double orphan aged 12 years old and a primary school dropout. Tafara (male) is a single orphan aged 14 years old and a primary school dropout who lives with his mother. Betty (female) aged 15 years old is a double orphan and a primary school drop out. Makanaka (female) aged 16 years old is a double orphan and a primary school drop out.

4.3 Why urban orphans drop out of Primary Education

Dropping out of school is a complex social problem for which there is no simple solution. Focusing attention on fixing one part of the problem calls attention to the need for solutions to many other parts as well, hence *'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts'* (Durkheim cited by Ritzer and Goodman, 2003). As shown by the data; dropping out of primary education comes as a process and not as an event. It is influenced by an array of proximal and distal factors related to the family, school, policy and community settings in which the student lives (Rumberger, 2001: 4).

Primary school pupils are generally seen as naive, devoid of the necessary decision-making capacity to quit schooling independent of external factors. It is relatively rare for an orphaned primary school pupil to make a snap judgment to leave school. The reasons commonly regarded as leading to dropouts that are linked to the individual may not be

the true causes but simplifications of more complex circumstances that are external to the individual (ED Home, 2005).⁷

In a country ravaged by economic hardships and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the plight of orphans in Zimbabwe seem to be getting worse by each passing day as the ‘traditional’ institutions are failing to cope. The analysis of this thesis takes a structural-functionalist perspective which says that society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and equilibrium (Mooney et al, 2002: 11). However; a breakdown of one major part of the system such as the family will affect other parts like the school, thus leading to ‘social pathologies’ like school dropouts and ‘street children’ (ibid).

4.4 Family-Related Factors: The ‘Career’ of Orphanhood

The family institution (nuclear and extended) has always been a source of existence and dependability for all children. Basing on a constellation of words like house, home and household, Bourdieu (1998: 64) defined the family as a set of related individuals linked either by alliance (marriage) or filiations, or less commonly, by adoption (legal relationship), and living under the same roof (cohabitation). According to UNESCO (2003), the family is the most important place for decisions about participation in schooling. On the other hand, the data shows that the death of parent/s in urban settings brings about drastic changes to the lifestyles of orphans which hamper their educational advancement. A nostalgic narration by one orphaned dropout reveals that change;

When my parents were still alive, life was much better [.....] I could afford to buy most of the things that I wanted and I used to attend schooling regularly [....] but now it's all gone [.....] (Makanaka, an orphaned girl)

In discussing about the family factors, orphanhood is likened to a ‘career’. Though the term career has traditionally been reserved for those who expect to enjoy the rises laid out within a profession; it is coming to be used in a broadened sense to refer to any social

⁷ http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ReachingGoals/Goal_2/Dropouts.html

strand of any person's course through life (Goffman, 1961). Orphanhood comes as a consequence of a process which includes the following phases; family background (before parental death/s), single orphanhood and double orphanhood. For example, in the case of terminal illness it begins long before the death of a significant adult. The various stages within this process render children vulnerable in different ways and for different reasons.

4.4.1 Family Background: Poverty, Family Size and Social Capital

Orphanhood is not just an apparent reason for dropping out of primary education. The data shows that many children from poor family backgrounds experience educational constraints even before being orphaned. Orphanhood only worsens an already existing condition of poverty. Poverty is defined as the inability to attain a minimal standard of living (World Bank, 1990 cited by Onah, 2001: 112). One is deemed to be poor if he/she cannot afford a minimum standard of nutrition, and other basic needs, and a further amount that would enable one to participate in the everyday life of the community (ibid). One respondent during the interview revealed this;

I: Where do most of them [dropouts] come from?

T: [...] they come from poor family backgrounds [.....] from high-density areas such as [.....].

I: OK; [pause] Why is that so?

T: It is because most families in the middle and low-density residential areas are usually educated and rich; they make plans to leave behind some wealth for their children before dying. On contrary; those in high-density residential areas are generally poor and most of them do not own houses of their own; they are lodgers. A number of them work in Industrial sites [implying low-paying jobs] whilst others are either self-employed or have temporary jobs. When they die, they cannot leave behind anything meaningful for their children, other than letting them go to the rural areas to live with other poor relatives. For those with no rural ties, the children [orphans] are left to endure the hardships of the city [.....] (Primary School Teacher, Female).

The above words are a pointer to the differential lifestyles between the rich (high-income) and the poor (low-income) families and their differential attitudes towards their children's education. Orphans from poor family backgrounds face educational constraints because of the lack of or minimal transferability of resources by their parents. According to Kim and Schneider (2005: 1185); parents act as contacting resource agents, who through their intimate social ties within the family can absorb and transmit resources to their children. Since poor people do not have many possessions, they are unlikely to transmit many resources. Instead; they leave behind a legacy of poverty to their children which become a 'generational curse'. According to Hallak (1990: 38), poverty is a major factor leading to drop-outs.

Reflecting on the point that many of the urban poor people reside in densely populated areas; one can therefore argue that they also have larger families. A large family size vis-à-vis a lower income means that if one dies, he/she will leave behind many vulnerable orphans. Due to poverty, those orphans will end up taking employment at a younger age and that prevents them from schooling. On the other hand, the data reveals that the educated and high-income earners have smaller family sizes and they plan ahead for their children's future educational needs by way of savings. They represent what Bourdieu (1998: 19) said when he regarded families to be '*corporate bodies*' with a tendency to perpetuate their social being, with all its powers and privileges, investing more in school education as a reproduction strategy.

In a non-welfare state like Zimbabwe; the urban poor are likely to suffer most as they do not have much social security. The social security system in Zimbabwe is working class based; it benefits the educated and high-income earners whilst neglecting people in domestic employment, self employment, informal sector and other low-income earners (Kaseke, 1988). One has to participate in the labour market in order to benefit from social insurance schemes (ibid). Therefore, the pension system in Zimbabwe can be understood as leading to a "workfare state" (Gilbert, 1998) as opposed to a welfare state. Gilbert (1998: 23) referred to this as the 'recommodification' of labour, in the sense that, social welfare benefits are tied to incentives and packaged in ways that increase the compulsion

to work in order to meet one's basic needs. As exposed by the data; those who are not formally employed will not manage to make any meaningful savings or to join some insurance schemes that will benefit their children in future.

The differential lifestyles between the high-income and low-income urban earners can also be understood by using the social capital theory. Putnam (2000: 19) offers a definition of social capital as 'connections among individuals- social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'.⁸ In line with the stories told by the interviewees, it appears that most of the lowly educated and poor people in urban areas embrace the traditional practice of having many children as a form of social security at old age. On the contrary, high-income parents who provide resources to their children do not expect the same levels of reciprocity from their children (Astone et al, Ben-Porath, 1980 cited by Kim and Schneider, 2005: 1181). By having many children, it means that the parent-child interaction will be reduced and the girl-child's education will be sacrificed as the parents adopt 'son-preference' attitudes. Without positive parent-child interaction, there is no mechanism to transmit available human (education) and financial capital (wealth or income) to children (Teachman et al, 1996).

The data also shows that social networks outside the family are important. According to Kim and Schneider (2005: 1184), high-income families have more options to diversify their social capital through contacts outside the family whereas low-income families do not have the same types or quantity of resources in their social networks. Taking a leaf from the Holy Bible verse in Proverbs 14: 20 which says, "*the poor is hated even by his own neighbour: but the rich has many friends*", the above argument is buttressed. Though the urban poor may have networks amongst themselves; they rarely network with other influential people. Theirs are 'networks of poverty'. Therefore; orphans whose parents had few networks are likely to end up living on their own (in a child-headed household), with elderly grandparents or with other poor guardians, as exemplified by a Guardian respondent;

⁸ In respect of children's development, social capital is defined by Coleman cited by Field (2003: 24) as the norms, the social networks, and the relationships between adults and children that are of value for the child's growing.

As for me, I am not formally employed but I do vending [...] that's the only way to survive; things are expensive these days. It has not been so easy to look after orphans [...] we had some problems with paying their school fees [...] it feels as if the 'vadzimu' [ancestral gods] have mocked us and left us all alone. (Guardian, Female).

In line with the above arguments; Bourdieu cited in Field (2003: 20) argued that, social capital was an asset of the privileged and a means of maintaining their superiority. There was no place for the possibility that other, less privileged individuals and groups might also find benefit in their social ties (ibid).

4.4.2 Single orphanhood: What does it bring about?

Having shown the importance of the family background to the understanding of orphaned dropouts, the next phase in the career of orphanhood is single orphanhood. According to the interviewees; orphanhood is a transformative process which begins at the loss of one parent. Losing either parent equally contributes to dropping out as the parent-child interaction is affected and the household resource base dwindles.

4.4.2.1 Paternal Orphanhood: The death of a 'Breadwinner'

The data links the vulnerability of children to the death of a customary breadwinner, the father. In contextualizing the Zimbabwean 'traditional' way of living, Nkomo (1998: 192) noted that; the patriarch was expected to be the principal bread winner, provider of shelter for the family and the de facto provider of the space within which his family as a unit lived. The male members were in theory, practice and nature, assumed to be the leaders of the basic social unit of families called the clan (ibid). In the same vein, one orphan narrated how their lives changed after the death of the breadwinner (the father);

My father is deceased [...] I am now living with my mother near the gum trees [an illegal settlement]. We used to live in a rented room in one of the high-density suburbs [name supplied] before my father died. However, we got evicted from

that house after we failed to continuously pay for the rentals. It is then that we went on to build a plastic shack near the gum trees. (Tafara, an orphaned boy).

Upon visiting the place (an illegal settlement), the situation is described in the Field Notebook (03/11/05) as '*squalid*'. This description is a pointer to the absolute poverty. Another vivid picture to show how a paternal death is detrimental to the primary education of orphans is revealed by this narration of a case;

After the death of their father, the children could not proceed with education because their widowed mother did not have the money to pay for school fees. I advised her to start an income-generating activity so that they could have a decent life. (Municipal Employee, Male)

From the above quotations, it is seen that the death of the father weakens the household resource base and the remaining family members will find it difficult to cope with the demands of the city (housing, transport, food, school related expenses and other expenses). Boler and Carroll (2003) in their study in Zimbabwe (Manicaland Province) found that, losing their mother has a more detrimental effect on children's primary school completion than losing their father. Using their findings for this discussion; it can be argued that the death of a mother affect mostly the emotional well-being of children whereas the loss of a father seem to affect both the emotional and the economic aspects. In a predominantly patriarchal society like Zimbabwe where women do most of the caring for children; there is bound to be some emotional bonding between the child and the mother, than with the father. However, the death of the father will ultimately affect the emotional side as well, as shown earlier by the orphans reminiscing of 'the good old days' (before the death of the father).

The data shows that gender imbalances are still common in Zimbabwe. Rooted in patriarchy, women are still socialized into subordinate roles (ascribed status) and they do not participate much in formal education and formal employment (achieved status). Adding her voice to the socialization argument, Noddings (1984) noted that females are

raised to care hence they are seen as better carers who are best suited for those tasks. As a result, they are confined to household duties (private sphere) whilst most men work outside the home (public sphere), often on a paid basis (UNESCO, 2003). This makes men to be the natural breadwinners. Therefore; the death of a breadwinner will worsen the situation as the widow and the orphans may resort to street begging or other low paying jobs like domestic work, prostitution and vending. In that kind of scenario, education is seen as a drain of household resources. On the household priority list, education is deemed insignificant compared to other household goals like paying for housing and purchasing food. Maslow cited by Mataruse and Mwatengahama (2001) indicated that; when food and safety are not guaranteed, motivation will be towards the satisfaction of these first before higher motives in the hierarchy take precedence.

Furthermore, the data shows that many widows in Gweru are 'cross-border traders' who usually spend several weeks or months in nearby countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique without returning back. By increasing the duration away from home, it means that the children will not be adequately supervised and monitored. This will lead to truancy and dropping out. Coleman cited by Teachman et al, (1996) argued that; the absence of one parent creates a structural deficiency that leads to less social capital on which children may draw; one parent families have less time available to invest in parent-child interactions.⁹ Moreover, the parent-child interaction is reduced when the widow remarries or ventures into prostitution. As reflected by one respondent;

If a widowed mother ventures into prostitution, the welfare of children is at risk because they will no longer get the attention they are supposed to get as minors [...] In that way, I regard them to be 'double orphans'. (Community Volunteer, Female).

⁹ Children in single-parent families receive less encouragement and less assistance with homework than children in two parent families (Amato, 1987; Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Dornbursch et al, Nock, 1988; cited by Teachman et al, 1996)

Most widows choose to take the route of re-marrying or prostitution after being chased away from their matrimonial homes by their husbands' relatives. Giving an example of Uganda, Ntozi, 1997 cited by Guarcello et al (2004: 7) pointed out that; more than one half of young widows under 35 years moved from the household of their late spouse to earn money or for remarriage. These changes can hinder orphans' schooling.

Indications based on the data are that the patriarchal system is at the zenith of a host of problems faced by widows and orphans which consequently lead the latter to prematurely quit primary education. Related to that is the practice of customary marriage. In Zimbabwe, there are basically three types of marriages available under the dual law system in existence. The first is the General Law or Civil Law marriage under the Marriage Act which is a monogamous marriage conducted by a registered Marriage Officer and it is the most preferable one among the Christians, the educated people and the high-income earners. The second type is the customary law marriage under the Customary Marriages Act which is mostly done by Africans at court or a registry office and it is potentially polygamous. The third one is the unregistered customary law union which again is mostly done by Africans and is potentially polygamous, except that there is no registration of the union.

The described types of marriages impact differently on women and children in the event of death and they can create a lot of problems and confusion regarding property and inheritance issues. As shown by the data, most of the less educated and low-income earners in Gweru urban prefer the unregistered customary unions, which are settled by way of paying *lobola* (bride price). By paying bride price, men assume total control over women, children and resources. An article by K. Mudzingwa in The Herald Newspaper of 19/04/2006 confirms that;

*The marriage set-up in our society today is still hinged on principles and practices that are heavily steeped in patriarchy. Marrying in our cultural milieu is not a contract between two people. It works more to the advantage of the man and his family. The traditional practice of paying **lobola** ensures that a woman*

totally surrender herself to her husband's family. She has to respect the patriarchal structures that enable her husband's mother, father, uncles, tetes (husband's sisters) etc to dominate her (The Herald, 19/04/2006).

Probably one might ask; what has marriage types to do with orphans' education? They are relevant because this study is discussing about a process and not an event. The type of a marriage union determines the course of action a widow can take in the event of 'property grabbing' by her husband's relatives. Under the 'registered monogamous marriage', the widow has the right to decide on property sharing issues whilst under the 'unregistered customary marriage' she has limited options, as the husband's relatives assume control. The following narrative reflection by a Primary School Teacher is more vivid;

Customary marriage practices allow that when a man dies, his relatives should have a say in the allocation of property whilst his wife has no say at all. This is unfair because the property meant to benefit the deceased's family is taken all by the relatives for themselves. (Primary School Teacher, Female).

This therefore shows that the death of the father affects the economic status of the family which ultimately hinders a single orphan's primary education.

4.4.2.2 Maternal Orphanhood: The death of a 'Carer'

Single orphanhood takes another form if it is the mother who has died and not the father. A maternal death does not necessarily bring about financial challenges that impinge on an orphan's education because the provider (breadwinner) is alive. However, the effect of a maternal death is that the child may be neglected as the father chooses to remarry, in accordance with the Zimbabwean tradition. As shown by the data; he tends to give much preference to his newly found wife, ahead of his children. Moreover, some step-mothers abuse single orphans, as revealed below;

[...] I know a case of young girl [a 15 year old] whose mother died and the father remarried [.....] She ran away from home citing abuse [beatings, denied

affection and verbal reprimands by the step-mother]. She has developed a negative attitude towards her and she won't even give her a chance. (Social Worker, Female)

The experiences of being abused at home aggravate orphans' trauma and they begin to reminisce of the days before their mothers' passing away. With little zest for life, single orphans lose the motivation and interest for education. As a result, they quit schooling; opting to live in the streets or any other place that is neither home nor school. Data from the field shows that many orphans who are habitual truants or primary school dropouts come from unstable home environments, especially those manned by step-mothers. Being a 'step-mother' in the Zimbabwean context, one is always viewed in bad light and that stigma stays. Step-mothers are seen as more abusive and intolerant than step-fathers. This argument is confirmed in part by Nyamukapa, et al (2003: 16) who noted that; maternal orphans often face stigma in the sense that the father remarries and the new wife declines to care for his previous children.

Furthermore, the interviewees revealed that maternal orphans drop out of school due to the lack of support from the public. They do not get much public sympathy since the father (assumed breadwinner) is alive. According to Nyamukapa and Gregson (2003: 2); the extended family, community, Government and NGO programmes are less likely to provide support and intervene when the natural father is still alive. For example; in a community study in Kagera, Tanzania, it was found that paternal and double orphans were more likely than maternal orphans to receive schooling assistance from individuals living outside the household (ibid: 5). In that way, maternal orphans are disadvantaged.

4.4.3 Double Orphanhood: Amplified Susceptibility

4.4.3.1 The Collapse of the Extended Family System

After the collapse of the nuclear family, the normal destination for double orphans in the Zimbabwean context is the extended family.¹⁰ The extended family gives orphans some emotional benefits, a sense of belonging and self-esteem (Kana'iaupuni et al, 2005: 1138). Nevertheless, the data shows that the weakening (declining social capital) of the extended family system is the reason why there are many orphaned school dropouts. Traditionally, the concept of a 'social' orphan did not exist in Zimbabwean societies. Biologically orphaned children were cared for by members of their extended family, especially by aunts and uncles who took on the care-giving functions of parents (Foster et al, 1997). Nowadays, the value of family ties is increasingly diminishing because of the following forces; modernization (adoption of individualistic lifestyles); the influence of the cash economy and the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS and orphan crises (demographic changes). Among urban dwellers, there is emerging a spirit of individualization, nuclear family loyalties and materialism. Individualization; as Georg Simmel cited by Beck (1992: 94) argued in the case of money means loosening local (traditional ties) and constructing non-local networks (the formal economy and the labour market). Having noticed the diminishing of family ties, Chirwa (2002) asked; can the process of the erosion of family ties and the 'collapse of the spirit of voluntarism' be reversed?

The data shows that the extended family system is collapsing due to weak networks among the urban people themselves and also with their rural kinsmen. Guarcello et al, (2004: 8) confirmed this by saying; more people in cities live in nuclear units with weaker ties to other branches of the family. As people in urban areas become more educated and employed, they would rather concentrate on nuclear family savings than on fostering family ties with their rural relatives. Therefore; children who belong to families with little regular contact with relatives are at risk of being abandoned if they are orphaned (ibid). As echoed by one respondent; relatives in rural areas usually reject orphans from urban areas by saying;

¹⁰ Extended families involve a large network of connections among people extending through varying degrees of relationship including multiple generations, over a wide geographical area and involving reciprocal obligations (Foster and Williamson, 2000 cited by Guarcello et al, 2004: 6).

You only think of us now because your parents are deceased. When they were still alive you never knew us, you ate [enjoyed] alone in town (Municipal Employee, Male).

Also, the data reveals that the weakening of family ties is a result of family disputes which emanate from witchcraft accusations (usually people in urban areas accusing their rural relatives of witchcraft) and outstanding debts. These disputes will affect orphans as the seemingly “aggrieved part” (a guardian) may wish to “settle a score” by neglecting the children of his/her ‘rival’ (the deceased). One orphaned interviewee narrated how the bride price (*lobola*) row between her late father and her maternal uncle affected her education;

After the death of my parents, I went on to live with my maternal uncle. However, life was not so easy there because he used to deny me food and to chase me away from his home. He said that my father did not pay him the full bride price [lobola] [...] I was made a sacrificial lamb for that and I could not continue with schooling, thus I sought solace in marriage [...]. (Makanaka, an orphaned girl)

As shown by the data; the extended family system’s capacity to care for orphans is dwindling. According to the Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Policy (1999: 4), the willingness of the extended family to care for orphans is dampened by the general poverty at that level. Similar views were revealed by one respondent;

Orphans often have nowhere to source money from since their relatives [extended family members] have their own immediate families to take care of [...] Those relatives do not want to take the responsibilities of raising orphans; they just want to be spectators than participators. Their excuses are that of low salaries from their workplaces, hence they cannot take care of large families. (Municipal Employee, Male).

Reflecting on the above; it can be argued that the dramatic rise in orphanhood has saturated the capacity of the extended family system. The increase in the 'dependency ratio' means that there is now a mismatch between supply and demand. According to Mupedziswa (1998: 103); the extended family has either become stretched to the limit or is experiencing some burn-out. For example; some households have orphans from two or more families and that usually strains household resources (Guarcello et al, 2004). One Guardian respondent had this to say;

Currently, I am looking after three orphaned children because I am their maternal aunt. However, I am expecting to receive two more orphans [my grandchildren] to take care of, since their only known parent [my daughter] passed away recently. (Guardian, Female).

From the above quotation, one can also argue that the traditional extended family system is either collapsing or it has already collapsed. In the traditional set up, orphan care was mostly done by the paternal relatives. However, this study reveals that maternal relatives are equally taking up those responsibilities.

Furthermore, the data shows that guardians with more children usually have less time, resources and energy available for orphans. Some of them are illiterate; they have little money for their own children's schooling let alone for the extra children in their care (SCUK, 2000: 23). They are in an ambivalent situation of choosing between their own immediate family needs and their wards' educational needs. According to Baylies, 2002 cited by Gundersen et al, (2004), the presence of an orphan in a family constitutes a serious financial burden. These costs are particularly relevant if a guardian is less likely to reap pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits from an orphan's education (Gundersen et al, 2004). The critical determinant is the nature of the family relationship between the orphan and the decision-making adult in the family or household. Consistent with "Hamilton's Rule", the closeness of family ties governs investments in children (Guarcello et al, 2004: 10). Therefore; those living with distant relatives or non relatives are likely to drop out of school comparable to those living with close relatives.

The interviewees also revealed that some guardians supplement their urban income by employing orphans to work in their income generating activities. Orphans are often excluded from primary education as they are an additional burden on their supporting family hence they are compelled to work. Exploitation of orphaned children sometimes takes the form of forced labour for example working as domestic servants in the extended family network (Loewenson, 1991 cited by Mupedziswa, 1998: 105).¹¹ The working of children is often done under the pretext of, ‘just helping out’, as shown by one respondent;

As you know, life in the City is expensive [.....]We cannot just fold our hands [...] everyone has to work, either by helping out at home or accompanying me to do some vending [selling vegetables and fruits]. They need [orphans] to learn this important principle [of hardworking] so that they can become self-sufficient in later life without becoming thieves or prostitutes [...] You see! [smiling]; I am imparting some important life skills to them [....] (Guardian, Female)

Another pointer to the collapse of the extended family as shown by the data is that orphans are often abused (by way of corporal punishments and taunts) and discriminated against compared to other children in the extended family household. As a result, they respond to those distressing experiences by quitting primary education (as a way of protesting).

4.4.3.2 Property Grabbing: A Perversion of a Cultural practice

Linked to the collapse of the extended family system is the mounting practice of property grabbing. Orphans drop out of school due to the lack of school fees as some unscrupulous relatives may exploit the orphan by taking away property they legally are entitled to inherit from their parents (Mupedziswa, 1998: 105). Particularly worrying in this respect is the fact that the property is often grabbed by family members of the deceased parents, ironically in the name of “guardianship” of the children (Chirwa, 2002). Their argument

¹¹ According to a report from the World Bank (2002), girls are more likely than boys to be retained at home for domestic work or for care-giving when incomes plummet due to AIDS deaths (Guarcello et al, 2004: 13).

is that they claim the property for the benefit of the children of the deceased (ibid). That kind of an argument is used as a cover-up by the relatives who grab property for their own use. According to one respondent;

Some care-givers [guardians] are only interested in the deceased's possessions rather than having a genuine concern with the welfare of orphans [.....] After abusing all of the deceased's wealth, they will not make any efforts to rectify their faults [...] Without the money to pay for school fees and other expenses, orphans are kept away from primary education. (NGO Employee, Male).

A similar sentiment is shared by an FBO Employee who says that;

[...] greedy relatives share the deceased's property among themselves. A parent may leave behind a house, car, furniture or money to benefit his children but these will be channelled to private use by the guardian. (FBO Employee, Male)

In addition to the above, the data shows that the practice of property grabbing is mostly done by paternal relatives in the name of tradition. According to Mupedziswa (1998: 98), there are numerous cultural contradictions which ultimately work against orphaned children today. Cultural practices in Zimbabwe have always been transmitted informally. It is from these unwritten rules that the practice of property grabbing has stemmed from. However, the shape it has taken in urban areas is a manifestation of an increasingly emerging culture of greediness and not that of caring for the vulnerable. As a result of the rapid socio-economic changes, it seems that society has reached a state of 'anomie', and the collective lifestyle is fading. Durkheim (1893) introduced the concept of 'anomie' to describe a situation whereby there is a decrease in the ability of traditional institutions to regulate and fulfil social needs. He noted that rapid social change disrupts the norms in society, leading to anomie. This means that rules on how people should behave with each other are breaking down and thus people do not know what to expect from one another. When norms become weak or are in conflict with each other, society is in a state of 'normlessness' (Mooney et al, 2002: 12).

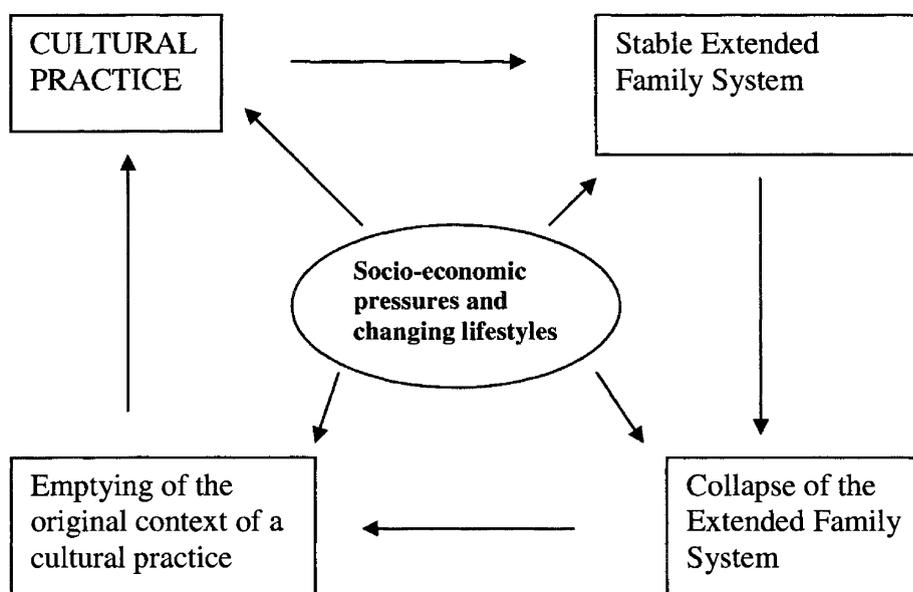
The extended family system seems to be in a dilemma of trying to maintain its traditional responsibilities amid unbearable socio-economic challenges. Traditionally, the practice of allowing paternal relatives to access the deceased's property was done so as to facilitate the continuation of the care of orphans, and not to enrich the care-givers. Nonetheless, culture is dynamic and not static; is that not so? Perhaps a new cultural practice of 'acquisitiveness' is emerging. Culture does not only mean a positive practice but a negative also. An urban culture is usually transmitted by 'formal' institutions such as the media, educational institutions, and other economic institutions. Therefore; the coming in of economic liberalization to a non-welfare state and to a collective society (Zimbabwe) seems to have brought 'confusion' to society, thus leading to '*normlessness*'. The 'group identity' (collective) has been overtaken by an 'individual identity' (individualism). It is now '*a survival of the fittest and an elimination of the weakest*' in society. As market forces are taking charge; the educational constraints for orphans are also increasing. In a market oriented system,

[...] it is acceptable for there to be winners and losers, access to resources which is differentiated but unrelated to need, hierarchy, exclusivity [...] there is pressure on individuals to be motivated first and foremost by self interest.
(Gewirtz, 1996:293 cited by Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 18)

In relation to property grabbing, this greediness can be seen as a perversion of a cultural practice due to various socio-economic pressures and changing lifestyles. Culture is defined as a way of acting, thinking and feeling which can be learned (Albrow, 1999: 20). It depends on individuals for continuous dismantling, reassembling and modification (ibid, 1999: 7). To culture we owe humanity and standards for our behaviour; yet it can equally produce inhumanity (ibid). To serialize the argument about the perversion of a cultural practice; 1) it starts with a **cultural practice** that allows property to be taken for the benefit of orphans; 2) in a **stable extended family system**; and 3) that **extended family system collapses**; and then 4) there is an **emptying** of the original context of a

cultural practice; 5) resulting in its **perversion** (property grabbing), thus 6) a **new cultural practice** (acquisitiveness) emerges.

Diagram 4.1: Perversion of a Cultural Practice



Source: Author

That perversion of a cultural practice has weakened the ‘traditional’ notion of trust and caring in society because some people have gone to the extremes, as revealed by one respondent;

Some relatives deny orphans their parents` death certificates. Without them, orphans cannot access pension benefits. As a result, they will not be able to pay for school fees (Primary School Teacher, Female)

The issues discussed above demonstrate how some actions and decisions undertaken by adults can negatively affect orphans’ primary schooling. That perversion of a cultural practice and the seemingly state of ‘normlessness’ is in contrast with Uwakwe’s (1998: 206) thinking that, Africans are ‘norm-conforming’ whilst Europeans are ‘non-conforming’. Possibly; the ‘norm-conforming’ tendencies among the former are eroding

because they are adopting individualistic lifestyles that they do not fully comprehend and cannot contextualize. If one does not know the meaning of something, he/she is likely to misrepresent it. Collectivism and individualism are direct opposites. Therefore, mixing the two can lead to a perversion of any of them.

4.4.3.3 Child Headed Households: A sanctuary for child poverty

Children who slip through the extended family safety and whose property has been taken by relatives may end up in a variety of vulnerable situations such as child-headed households (Guarcello et al, 2004: 8). The phenomenon of child-headed families is inevitable in a society where institutional care and adoption are not very much preferred. The data shows that the loss of both parents increases the educational constraints for child-headed households, especially for girls. According to a Primary School Teacher;

[...] an orphaned girl child is mostly affected because she takes over the roles of her mother. She looks after her younger siblings and she does some household chores like sweeping, washing clothes and dishes. Due to these commitments at home, she is likely to drop out of primary education. (Primary School Teacher, Female)

Also, the interviewees revealed that double orphans quit schooling because of having no birth registration certificates. According to SCUUK (2000); some 40 million children worldwide, one in three of all newborns are unregistered each year. If the parents die without obtaining birth certificates for their children, it will be difficult for orphans to acquire some. Accessing a birth certificate is a cumbersome process if one does not have both biological parents. Other relatives may try to help in the early stages but they will give up at a later stage, after failing to meet the requirements of the Births Registry office. Without birth certificates, those orphans are barred from writing Grade 7 primary examinations; hence they drop out of school at that level. Having experienced life outside school, orphans will usually find it difficult to return to school again.

4.5 Community-Related Factors

4.5.1 Residential Location and Peer Influence

In addition to families, it emerged from the data that residential location and peer influence are linked to the dropping out of orphans. The environment in which an orphan lives can shape his/her perceptions and attitudes towards schooling. There is at least some empirical evidence to show that differences in neighbourhood characteristics can help explain differences in dropout rates among communities apart from the influence of families (Brooks-Gunn et al 1993, Clark, 1992, Crane, 1991 cited by Rumberger, 2001: 17). According to Silvey (1982: 89), dropouts are found more in the poorer and more isolated sections of the community. As revealed earlier; most primary school dropouts in Gweru come from densely populated and poor residential areas and not from low-density areas. It is not a secret that most violators of child rights in urban areas are high-density communities who provide employment opportunities for orphaned children both during and after school.

Dropout can also be explained by the evidence from the data which suggests that people in urban settings are no longer helping out their neighbours because of individualism. However; an individualistic lifestyle contrasts the Zimbabwean communitarian ethos. The former is relevant to developed countries in Western Europe who have long traditions of welfare states. Therefore, it is ironic for the urban people in Zimbabwe to adopt individualistic lifestyles in a grossly unequal, developing and non-welfare state. This will lead to the utter neglect of orphans in the community.

Furthermore, the participants revealed that orphans from high-density areas drop out of primary education due to peer influence. As revealed by a Social Worker;

[...] an orphan drops out of primary school because of peer pressure. He/she runs away from school, going to people of the same age group who don't enjoy schooling. (Social Worker, Female)

Peer influence in high density areas is the gateway to truancy and dropping out. Carbonaro, 1998 cited by Rumberger (2001: 17) postulated that; students living in poor communities may also be more likely to have friends as dropouts, which increases the likelihood of dropping out of school. As orphaned children are seeking attention and company, they end up teaming up with other vulnerable children and they influence each other to quit schooling and to engage in 'unlawful' activities. Whilst social capital is generally good; in this sense it becomes a liability as the orphans will be forming 'delinquent networks' instead of 'study groups'. Peer pressure and a strong desire for acceptance will induce them to take up harmful habits (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000: 3).¹²

4.5.2 Community-Based Targeting (CBT) missing the 'target'

The data also reveals that orphans are kept out of primary education because of the flaws of some community-based social protection programmes. Most of the educational and financial assistance programmes for orphans in Zimbabwe have adopted "bottom-up" approaches. The government, private sector, and NGOs are working with communities to programme for substantial populations of orphans and other vulnerable children using community-based approaches. One way of doing that is by way of CBT, as is the case with BEAM and other orphan care programmes. Conning and Kevane (2001: 2) define community based targeting (CBT) as a state of policy of contracting with community groups or intermediary agents to have them carry out one or more of the following activities: (1) Identify recipients for cash or in-kind benefits, (2) monitor the delivery of those benefits, and or (3) engage in some part of the delivery process. From the data, it emerged that some orphans do not get assistance from those social protection programmes. According to one respondent;

Some members of the community who select beneficiaries choose their own relatives who do not even deserve; leaving out deserving orphans [...] those left

¹² Young people tend to commit their first offences at a relatively young age with a survey suggesting that the average age at which males and females start to offend is 13.5 (Graham and Bowling cited by Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 90)

out of the programme will have to wait until the next selection. (Ministry of Education Employee, Male)

Moreover, the data shows that single orphans are disadvantaged when it comes to the selection of beneficiaries by various social protection programmes. Double orphans are seen as more vulnerable than single orphans (especially maternal orphans); hence the latter are not given priority for assistance. In that way, their (single orphans) right to primary education is compromised. Their plights seem to have been minimised by using a wrong yardstick of comparing them with double orphans. Selection should be based on vulnerability rather than on mere double orphan status.

4.6 School-Related Factors

4.6.1 Discomforting experiences at school

It is widely acknowledged that schools exert powerful influences on dropout rates (Rumberger, 2001: 13). The school environment can shape the perceptions and attitudes of orphans towards education, either in a positive (confidence building) or negative (due to stigmatization) way. In the early phase of orphanhood, most orphans come to school with great enthusiasm since they see it as an alternative to the new set-up at home. However, such zest is quashed by the stigmatization and ridicules they face at the hands of both the teachers and other pupils. Feeling alienated from the school culture; they begin to loathe almost everything about schooling. As one interviewee said;

The school system is not well equipped to receive and accommodate children from vulnerable backgrounds such as orphans. The pace that teachers move with makes it impossible for those children to catch up [.....] The blanket treatment of pupils kills the learning spirit of orphans and they lose the motivation to continue schooling. Teachers and Headmasters should be trained in orphan care issues because some of them do not have the skills to relate to and to counsel orphaned students. (NGO Employee, Male)

The symbolic interaction framework argues that, students from economically advantaged families are likely to bring social and verbal skills into the classroom that elicits approval

from teachers (Mooney et al, 2002: 14), and the opposite is also true. Some orphaned pupils believe that they are treated differently by their teachers in spite of the fact that the latter claim to treat all students equally; treatment that is rooted in their manner of dress and socio-economic background. In other words, they feel excluded from the institutional culture of their schools and they respond to this exclusion by exiting the system (Brady, 1996). Nevertheless; it is the influence of other pupils (peers) which greatly dissuade orphans to continue schooling. For example, a Primary School Teacher (respondent) revealed that orphans who come to school without nice shoes, uniforms and other necessities like books, pens and packed lunch are constantly ridiculed by their fellow peers who have such. Also, the age of orphans can be a source of ridicule at school. This can be exemplified by what Betty (an orphan) said during the interview,

[...] I cannot go back to school now because of my age. It's shameful to be in the same class with young children. That stage [primary education] is now behind me, I am not thinking about it now [...] this is my fate; there is nothing much that I can do about it. (Betty, an orphaned girl)

Similarly; some primary school girls who are in their early maturation stages prefer to stay at home for fear of being ridiculed if they do not have appropriate sanitary materials. A recent series of studies about the management of puberty in primary schools in Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe document how girls who experienced menstruation without adequate preparation, or facilities, were regularly absent or even dropped out of primary school (Kasente, 2003 cited by UNESCO, 2003).

4.6.2 Constant Failure in School: A gateway to truancy and dropping out

Poor academic performance is the single strongest school-related predictor of dropping out (OERI Urban Superintendents Network 1987; Hess et al, 1987 cited by Woods, 1995). Stories from the respondents revealed that academic failure is one of the reasons why orphans drop out of the primary education system. The resource base of a given school has an influence on academic success or failure. One respondent (an FBO employee) revealed that, in some schools (mostly in the high-density areas) students share textbooks which are torn, without enough pages. Therefore, primary schools with

limited resources (such as books, learning aids) are likely to have higher failure rates. According to a Primary School Teacher (respondent); the teacher-student ratio in some schools can reach as far as 1 (teacher): 60 (pupils), thereby affecting the attention given to an individual student. In that kind of scenario, failure is inevitable.

Poor academic performance among orphans is also a consequence of the factors related to the home environment, as shown by one respondent;

[...] orphans living with guardians usually seem traumatized [...] they are usually late-comers, they sleep in class, and they always look tired [...] they do not concentrate much in class [...] (Primary School Teacher, Female)

Therefore, orphans' physical and psycho-social health should be considered when assessing their performance in school. Orphans are different from other vulnerable children in that they have lost a parent (Boler and Carroll, 2003). They are grieving. Grieving is a process, and some children never stop grieving (ibid). If they are not helped to overcome this grief, orphans will perform poorly in school and they constantly repeat grades. In an annual dropout report by the United States Department of Education, it was noted that students who repeated one or more grades were twice likely to drop out than those who had never been held back, and those who repeated more than one grade were four times as likely to leave school before completion (Woods, 1995).

According to the generated data; orphans also drop out because they feel alienated and frustrated by the 'bookish' type of learning. In the same way, Brady (1996) argued that; today's educational process instils the business creed into students; stressing the practical usefulness of education; competitive success and making students conform to middle-class standards. Taking the Marxian concept of alienation, Mooney, et al (2002: 13) argued that; orphans from poor families who find that the curriculum is not meaningful to their lives will quit schooling. They believe themselves to be ignored by a system which is oriented towards their brighter peers (Karp, 1988 cited by Brady, 1996). Indeed, Bourdieu (1977) cited by Furlong and Cartmel (1997: 13) predicted that the social and

cultural advantages possessed by the middle-class would have great impact on levels of attainment as ‘meritocratic’ educational policies became widespread. The basic principle of ‘meritocratic’ education is that educational credentials are won by those who have shown merit (ibid). This denotes an achievement oriented society.

4.6.3 Weak linkage between the home and the School

One concept frequently used to describe the good and beneficial relation between parents and school is “partnership” (Fylling and Sandvin, 1999: 145). However; a weak relationship between the home and the school is detrimental to the primary schooling of orphans. As shown by the data; most guardians fail to create some time to visit the school to learn about their wards’ academic performance and behaviour. A guardian is usually too busy to commit himself/herself to an orphan’s cause. According to Anisef and Johnson (1993 cited by Brady, 1996), the lack of a stable and supportive family often leads to lower levels of academic achievement which can lead to the decision to prematurely leave school. On the other hand, school teachers are no longer making follow-ups to their pupils. As confirmed by an FBO Employee;

If a student is not coming to school for some days, the teacher does not make any follow-up to find out why. These are no longer the kind of teachers we used to know long back. Their morale to work has been reduced because of low remuneration [...] this has changed the outlook of our education. (FBO Employee, Male)

The primary school just like the pre-school should be an arena where a ‘genuine partnership’ between parents and schools exists for the benefit of the pupil (Cullingford, 1985; Bastiani, 1993 cited by Fylling and Sandvin, 1999: 145). Reflecting on the above words of the respondent who laments about the decreasing partnerships; one can say that there is no longer a ‘protector’ of the educational needs of orphans. The kind of a ‘teacher’ that the respondent nostalgically remembers about was an ‘advocate’ of the children who believed that, ‘the total physical, mental and social well-being of the pupils was his/her prime concern’ (NUT, 1968 cited by Fylling and Sandvin, 1999: 145). This signifies a committed teacher.

On the other hand; the dropping out of orphans and the low morale of teachers have created an awkward scenario in the primary education sector of Zimbabwe in which both the teacher and the student are quitting, in one way or the other.

4.6.4 School Policies: Sound administration or double standards?

According to the respondents; the dropping out of orphans from primary education is also a result of some of the policies and practices of schools. Schools may affect turnover directly through explicit policies and conscious decisions that cause students to 'involuntarily' withdraw from school (Rumberger, 2001: 17). The data revealed that; if students have not paid the school fees in full and if they do not have books or uniforms, the Headmaster sends them away from school. An orphaned boy gave the following account;

The headmaster said that I could not continue attending lessons or write tests since I had not paid the full school fees of Z\$350 000. I had only managed to pay Z\$100000; Z\$250 000 plus books and uniforms were still outstanding (Simbarashe, an orphaned boy)

Most schools do not have considerations for individual cases. They assume that students who face difficulties are catered for by the various social protection programmes. What they fail to realize is that some orphans do not benefit from those programmes. Therefore; asking them to bring school fees is as good as telling them to quit schooling. One metaphor that has been used to characterize this process is discharge: "students drop out of school, schools discharge students" (Riehl, 1999: 231 cited by Rumberger, 2001: 17). In this way, schools contribute to students' involuntary departure from school by systematically excluding and discharging 'problematic' students like orphans. 'Problematic,' because they do not meet the standards and targets of schools. In this fashion, schooling does not only select and prepare the 'elite class'; it also rejects the great majority on the way (van Rensburg, 1984: 24 cited by Nārman, 1998: 177).

4.7 Policy-Related Factors

4.7.1 The Commodification of Primary Education

Cost-sharing can be seen as a strong contributing factor in the reduction of primary enrolment in many African countries (Nårman, 1998: 173). Commodification is used here to reflect the changing political ideologies which have resulted in an increased tendency to treat education as a consumer product (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 18). In the recent past years, the educational costs in terms of school fees, levies, uniforms and books have increased tremendously beyond the reach of many people in Zimbabwe. It appears that economic liberalism is being embraced in Zimbabwe's educational system since the schools are now charging school fees at different rates, with minimal state intervention. One respondent (a Primary School Teacher) noted that; *"the costs are now determined by the economic environment; inflationary trends."*

A closer examination of the 'commodification' of primary education in Zimbabwe shows that, it is a result of the current economic decline and also an outcome of ESAP. Whereas social democratic governments tend to regard education as a means through which equality of opportunity can be increased, the situation in Zimbabwe seem to be a 'rebirth' of the ESAP era as it is moving towards a 'free market economy'. According to Davies and Sanders (1988: 286); the pressures of funding the rapidly expanding education system forced the government to raise the cost of schooling to parents and the schools were allowed to charge levies, which in most cases are higher than school fees. One of the respondents (a Ministry of Education Employee) stressed the point that there is no longer free primary education in Zimbabwe. The meteoric rise of user fees in the primary education sector of Zimbabwe contradicts the UNMDG and it also violates children's rights to basic education.

As reported by The Sunday News of 19/02/2006; about 80 pupils at Makwatheni Primary School in Nkayi district in Zimbabwe dropped out of school because their parents could not afford the recently increased fees from \$50 000 to \$300000. The ever increasing school related expenses are keeping orphans out of primary education as exposed by an FBO Employee;

Many orphans drop out of school because of poverty. The recent increases in school fees and levies by 1000% mean that most families will not afford to pay school fees for orphans. Orphans get little attention and priority than other children within the extended family. (FBO Employee, Male)

Commodifying primary education in a situation where social need is so great means that the schools are able to continue to reproduce social inequalities while maintaining a veneer of open access (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977 cited by Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 19).

If orphans drop out of school due to unbearable costs, it is normally expected that various social protection strategies should adequately cater for them. However, those social protection strategies that are intended to provide educational assistance to orphans also tend to misfire as revealed earlier. A Ministry of Education Employee (respondent) further revealed that, the budgets given to schools under BEAM are based on schools' enrolment figures rather than on need. Schools with high enrolments receive high budgetary allocations yet they may not have many cases of vulnerable children compared to other schools with lower enrolment figures. This criteria is subjective, hence the importance of carrying out 'needs assessments'.

5 Consequences of Dropping out of Primary Education

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion about the consequences of dropping out of primary education. The data shows that dropping out of primary education leads to other social problems as well.

5.2 Street Children

As revealed by the study participants, the problem of “street children” in the city of Gweru is largely a consequence of orphaned primary school dropouts. A recent study in Zimbabwe found that half of street children are orphans (Guarcello et al, 2004: 15). After failing to find the needed comfort and affection from the home and school environments, most orphans resort to living in the streets. The analyzed data shows that many orphans from high-density areas are influenced by their peers to quit schooling and to run away from home. They are enticed by some pseudo ‘freedom’ of the street life. However; the stories from the field shows that, living in the streets is risky for children since they are defenceless. There is so much happening in the streets which is detrimental to their well-being. Living in the streets requires a lot of stamina and dexterity.

As observed in the field; those street children who wander ‘aimlessly’ in the city of Gweru contribute to pollution (dropping litter bins in search of food) and to the creation of other social problems such as begging. By engaging in ‘street begging’, orphans are often branded as ‘*beggars*’ and stigmatized as ‘*irritating street kids*’. The data also revealed that, some street children engage in risky activities such as drinking alcohol, smoking pieces of cigarettes, cannabis and sniffing dangerous adhesives like glue. By getting drunk, they believe that they will be able to forget about their numerous problems. Moreover, it is a mechanism that they use to gather enough courage to eat the food taken from litter bins. Abusing drugs and alcohol at early ages (12-16years) puts them at risks leading to life threatening diseases like lung cancer. Generally, the health of street children is poor because they do not have shelter, good clothes and good food. Furthermore, they can be easily exploited by some adult members of society, as revealed by a Social Worker;

Some adults pick up young children from the streets, giving them money before sexually abusing them (Social Worker, Female)

In that way, orphans are susceptible to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.

In small group settings (as street children), orphaned dropouts are also involved in criminal activities as they adapt to the norms of peer cultures (Sutherland 1949 cited by Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 90). Sutherland suggests that individuals engage in criminal acts when such activities are defined as acceptable by their associates (ibid).

5.3 Child Abuse, Prostitution and HIV/AIDS

Orphans who quit primary schooling are vulnerable to all forms of child abuses. The orphaned girl-child is more susceptible to sexual abuse. Sexual abuse takes two forms as orphaned children can either 'willingly' offer sexual favours (though they are deemed to be unable to consent for sex by the law because of their age) or they are raped by their relatives, neighbours, employers and strangers. According to one respondent;

Orphans who do not go to school are at a higher risk of being sexually abused by their relatives and employers alike. Because of ignorance and fear, they do not report such cases. At least in school, pupils are taught how to report abuses ...
(FBO Employee)

When children are abused by care-givers, they are not only physically and emotionally harmed, they often blame themselves for the failings of those they trust and love. They become abusers in future (Corsaro, 2005: 243).

Evidence from Zimbabwe also suggests that OVCs are more likely to engage in sex at an earlier age than non-OVCs (Boler and Carroll, 2003). This evidence further suggests that maternal orphans (children whose mother has died) are more likely to become HIV-positive than any other type of orphans (ibid). Being a poor orphan and a school dropout

at the same time makes a girl-child to be more susceptible to sexual abuses, as she would rather engage in prostitution than to endure poverty. An example is given by one respondent;

There is a case that I know of a 13 year old girl [a dropout] who is now engaged in prostitution. Surprisingly, she professed ignorance when I asked her whether she was aware of the consequences of her risky behaviour. She did not care much about the HIV/AIDS issue because she said that she only wanted the money to use since her parents are deceased (Primary School Teacher, Female)

In relation to the above, the preferred interpretation is that participation in the formal education system reduces susceptibility to HIV infection. Boler and Carroll, (2003) found that; participation in schooling leads to later sexual debut and it lower the numbers of casual sexual partners as the child will be busy with schooling than being idle. The other explanation of how formal education may change sexual behaviour lies in increased access to information; both to HIV related materials in school, and better access to such material later in life (ibid). According to Beck (1992: 35), education and attentiveness to information open up new possibilities of dealing with and avoiding risks. Therefore; the *'education vaccine against HIV is likely to be the only one available in the near future'* (Vandemoortele and Delamonica, 2000 cited by Hepburn, 2001). Evidence from Zimbabwe shows that among 15-18 years old girls, those who are enrolled in school are more than five times less likely to have HIV than those who have dropped out (UNAIDS, 2006).

Furthermore, the data shows that orphaned school dropouts are susceptible to teen pregnancies and single motherhood. Quitting school early usually mean that some girls may get early pregnancies and the 'abuser/boyfriend' will deny responsibility, for fear of going to jail (having committed statutory rape) or any other reasons. This leads to the problem of abortion or single lone motherhood. As one orphaned respondent narrated;

I was a bright student who had the potential to succeed. After quitting school, I got married last year [at 15 years of age] because there was nothing for me to do [...] My husband left me and I hear that he remarried elsewhere [...]
(Makanaka, an orphaned girl)

Single motherhood creates welfare dependency and that is detrimental to the economic aspirations of a non-welfare state. Also, single mothers have been shown to have a weak labour market commitment (Murray, 1990 cited by Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 51). As a result, single mothers are likely to experience poverty, which is easily transmitted to their children.

5.4 Child labour

When orphans have dropped out of primary school, they risk being exploited either by their relatives or other members of the community who regard them as a source of cheap and readily available labour. In fact, some of those adults do not see it as child labour but as, *'just helping out'*. The respondents revealed that, girls within the extended family system are often employed as *"house-girls"* (meaning domestic employment) whilst boys are not very much involved. This kind of gender discrimination negates the whole notion of equality and it perpetuates their (girls and women) social exclusion.

Whilst some orphaned dropouts work in their guardians' income generating activities and household chores; the data reveals that some orphans engage in car washing to get money for food. A Community Volunteer (respondent) also gave an example of a case of an orphaned dropout (heading a household) who was selling 'cell phone recharge cards' in order to generate income. In addition, a Guardian (respondent) gave an example of an orphaned primary school dropout who used to work as a 'Commuter Bus Conductor'. However; an account given by Betty (an orphaned dropout) is more vivid;

After the death of my parents I lived with other relatives before my paternal uncle and his wife brought me here. Still, I could not proceed with my education due to the lack of school fees [...] my uncle is doing some 'piece works' [short-term/part-time jobs] for a living and his wife is not employed. The family is

finding it difficult to live in town. So, I am helping them out to raise money by selling “freezits” [cooled drinks]. By so doing, I am not paid because I am their child [they are taking care of me] (Betty, an orphaned girl)

Though child labour is generally illegal, there are even higher chances as revealed by the data that orphaned dropouts will venture into more prohibited tasks such as prostitution, “black-market trading” and “illegal gold panning” (in the outskirts of the city). One respondent said,

Nowadays because of the shortages of fuel, I have seen some school dropouts selling fuel on the illegal market [...] Perhaps; they were working for some adult persons [...] (NGO Employee, Male)

These and other cases of child employment do not only violate children’s rights but they also deny them a chance to be children. According to Guarcello, et al (2004: 14); UNICEF’s study in 20 Sub-Saharan African countries found out that, children aged 5-14 who had lost one or both parents were less likely to be in school and more likely to be working more than 40 hours a week. Rapid assessments carried out by the International Labour Organization found that orphaned children are much more likely than non-orphans to be working in commercial agriculture, domestic service, commercial sex and as street vendors (ibid).

5.5 Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency is a common occurrence among orphaned school dropouts. As noted by the respondents; boys generally become a nuisance to society by thieving, smoking cannabis, sniffing adhesives and engaging in other deviant activities. According to a Social Worker (respondent);

Many primary school dropouts engage in delinquent activities and they have no future since they are well versed with crime than going to school. (Social Worker, Female)

By deviant behaviour, reference is made to those behaviours that are viewed by prevailing societal norms as generally unacceptable and that are non-normative. Juvenile delinquency on the other hand is a legal term referring to criminal acts committed by a young person under the age of 18 (Neale et al, 1994: 435). Control theorists such as Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) cited by Furlong and Cartmel, (1997: 90) argue that, peer group influence and the lack of close adult supervision provide young people with opportunities to engage in illegal activities either for excitement or financial gain. Similarly, the problem behaviour theory posits that weak attachment to family and school and strong attachment to deviant peers predict not only adolescent substance use, but a constellation of related deviant behaviours including delinquency and precocious sexuality (Swaim et al, 1998: 128). These theories seem to point out that the weakening of the major institutions (such as the family) causes orphaned school dropouts to bond with deviant peers. According to Kaare (2005); poor socialisation will mean that those children will not live within society's moral codes. As they continue to be deviant; they will take up 'criminal careers' in their later lives.

5.6 Illiteracy, Poverty and a Low life expectancy

Beyond the short-term consequences of dropping out of primary education, the data reveals that there are also long-term consequences. Losing the opportunity to attend school may be particularly damaging for orphans, denying them a sense of continuity and security in the short term, and an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills needed for adult life in the long run (Guarcello et al, 2004: 7). Education is an essential factor in the improvement of health and nutrition, for maintaining high-quality environments, for expanding and improving labour pools, and for sustaining political and economic responsibility (Hallak, 1990: 11). Without primary education, orphaned children will find it hard to make a smooth transition to adulthood.

UNICEF (1999:7) predicted that; nearly a billion people will enter the 21st Century unable to read a book or sign their names, much less to operate a computer and understand a simple application form. And they will live, as now, in more desperate poverty and poor health than most of those who can (ibid). Illiteracy has been correlated with poverty (Hadebe, 1998: 125), and the latter attracts an unfortunate abundance of

risks (Beck, 1992: 35). By contrast, the wealthy (in income, power or education) can purchase safety and freedom from risk (ibid). According to Furlong and Cartmel (1997: 13); young people from privileged social backgrounds tended to develop an awareness that the maintenance of their economic and social advantages was partly on their educational attainments. Their frames of reference, or what Bourdieu (1977) would refer to as their “habitus”, reinforced by experiences in the home and school, made these processes of social reproduction seem both natural and inevitable (ibid). To that extent, it can be argued that ‘risks’ such as dropping out of school seem to strengthen, not to abolish the class society.

Early school dropouts as shown by the data can also negatively affect the whole nation by having high illiteracy levels and unemployment. Higher rates of unemployment and lower earnings cost the nation both lost productivity and reduced tax income (Rumberger 2001: 3). Moreover, research demonstrates that dropouts are also more likely to have health problems, engage in criminal activities, and become dependent on welfare and other government programs than those who complete school (ibid). These indicators of dropping out of school hold back development.

Lack of education does not only lead to poverty, unemployment and other social ills but it also affects the psychological well-being of individuals, resulting in low self-esteem which is commonly associated with criminality and suicide. As revealed by one respondent;

Without education, you cannot be counted among other people [...] you constantly look down upon yourself [...] (Community Volunteer, Female)

Furthermore; orphaned dropouts are often distressed because of their life experiences such as ‘bereavement’, ‘rejection’, ‘living in poverty’, ‘being abused’ and ‘inability to attend school’. One orphaned respondent showed this distress by saying;

Sometimes I contemplate committing suicide especially if I think too much about all the things that I have gone through in my life [...] (Makanaka, an orphaned girl)

For single orphans, the remaining parent will also suffer as he/she will be trying to think about the future of his/her dropout child. For example, a survey by The Learning and Skills Council in United Kingdom found that a third of parents whose children quit education suffered depression symptoms. The reasons for increased stress among parents were worries that their child; would not be able to lead the life they hoped for (27%); concern that their child would be unemployed (22%); and that their child would not get a good job (20%) (BBC NEWS, 09/02/2006).

By and large; all the consequences mentioned in this chapter shows that dropping out of primary education affects the general development of an individual and the nation as a whole.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Summary

In the quest to uncover and comprehend why urban orphans drop out of primary education; in-depth interviews, observations and other secondary sources of data were utilised. The main themes of this study are grounded in the data. 12 people who included 4 orphaned dropouts and 8 'other adult actors' (i.e. adults with prior in-depth experiences of working with orphaned children) were interviewed. The generated data were interpreted by way of comparing them, so as to discover the relationships and the emerging patterns.

The study has shown that the underlying reason why orphans drop out of primary education in Gweru City in Zimbabwe is because of the external factors linked to the family, the community, the school and to policies. These factors are; poverty, limited resource transmission from parent to child, family size, lack of birth registration certificate, diminishing social capital, collapse of the extended family system, property grabbing by the relatives, prohibitive costs of education, residential location, peer influence, loopholes in community-based social protection strategies, discomfoting experiences for orphans at school, poor performance at school, school policies and a weak linkage between the home and the school. In discussing them, various theoretical standpoints such as social capital theories, social reproduction theories and social bonding theories were used.

The consequences of dropping out of primary education were shown to be grave. According to the data; dropping out creates other social problems like 'street children', child abuse, child labour, teen pregnancies, single motherhood, abortion, suicide, juvenile delinquency, STIs, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, crime, teen substance abuse, prostitution and poverty. All these consequences will ultimately lead to social exclusion, reduced life expectancy and human factor decay. Human factor refers to 'the spectrum of personality characteristics and other dimensions of human performance that enable social, economic and political institutions to function, and remain functional over time'. (Adjibolosso,

1995: 4 cited by Kambudzi, 1998: 222). Without basic education, orphans' material development and contribution towards national development is limited.

However; there is no one magical and quick solution to the orphaned school dropout problem. Solutions to that complex social problem cannot be achieved by one institution alone. For example, the school institution cannot work effectively towards an orphan's educational cause without the family, and vice-versa. Thus, many educators and others concerned with the dropout problem are advocating for policies involving a broad range of institutions and agencies (e.g., Hargroves, 1987 cited by Woods, 1995). The phenomenon of orphaned school dropouts is a national problem which must be addressed by the whole society. It requires resources that go beyond the school, and solutions require a team approach; the combined efforts (partnerships) of students, parents/guardians, community leaders, social workers, teachers, administrators, CBOs, NGOs, FBOs, business, law enforcement agencies, local government, and central government.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Orphaned Dropouts (12-16 years old)

1. Introduction

- Myself, the objectives, informed consent

2. Childhood and family background

-Family composition, family circumstances, extended family, any experiences of care.

-What was life like? What was happening before the loss of parent/s? (*Probe*)

3. Experiences of orphanhood/ changes after loss of parent

-When did you lose your parent/s and how?

-How did you feel after losing your parent/s?

-What were the challenges/problems you faced after loss of parents?

4. Relationship with guardians

-Who is living with the children now?(*Probe about guardian's family, occupation, resources, level of education, living arrangements, treatment he/she receives etc*)

5. School life and education

-Did you have opportunities of attending school?

-Experiences of primary education and the results. Regularity of attendance (*Probe more*)

-Relationship with teachers and other students. Did you have any friends, where are they?

-When did you leave school? Is primary education important to you or not? Why?

6. Reasons for dropping out of primary education

-How it came about? Events surrounding beginning of crisis. What was happening?

-What made you not to continue with your primary education? How do you feel about your dropping out of school?

-What other options were there for you to continue with school?

-Do you regret leaving school early? Why?

7. What do they do instead of going to school? (Coping)

- How do you spend your normal daily life doing? Do you enjoy it? How and in what sense is it enjoyable?

- How are you coping with life out of school?

8. Ending Guide

-Reassurances about confidentiality and how the data will be used.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide- Other Adult Actors

1. Introduction

-Self, research objectives, informed consent and establish rapport.

2. Family, educational and occupational background

-Informant's age, gender and family.

-Educational background and why he/she works with orphans.

-What is the orphan situation like in Gweru?

-Who are the other service providers?

3. Nature of work (Explore and probe about specific cases known)

-Working experience with orphans (their families, their views and their challenges)

- Have you ever had contacts with orphaned dropouts in your work?

-Tell me more about the case/s you remember very well that you came across?

- From your practical work experiences, what are the factors which hinder orphaned children's continuation with primary education? (*Probe and request him/her to give examples of specific cases he/she has dealt with before.*)

4. What do primary school dropouts do instead of going to school?

-What do children in this area do most of the time and why do they do that?

- Who are the primary school dropouts in Gweru urban and where do they come from?

5. Impacts of orphaned dropouts on themselves and their communities

- If orphaned children are not going to school, what do they do in this area and what impact does that have to society? (Ask for specific examples of cases)

6. Coping mechanisms of Orphaned dropouts

-How do they cope with loss and dropping out?

7. Ending Guide

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Request Letter

Dear Parent/ Guardian

I am a Master student in Comparative Social Work at Bodø University College, Norway. I would like to invite your ward /..... to participate in a Master thesis research about the experiences related to schooling.

His/her participation will include being interviewed once for about 45 minutes. The name of your ward will not be mentioned. The thesis will be written in such a way that his/her identity will be protected by way of using pseudonyms. As a participant, he/she has the right to withdraw from the study any time during the interview.

This study is an academic one and will be shared amongst my course colleagues, supervisor, and other appropriate members of Bodø University College. The Master thesis that results from this work will be published in a hard copy.

I appreciate your giving permission for your ward/..... to participate in this study. If you have any questions or queries, please feel free to call/contact me at.....

Thank you
Rochford Elias Makovere.....

Please sign below if you are willing to allow your ward..... to participate in the Master thesis research study outlined above.

Signature:.....

Child:.....

Date:.....