

THE CHALLENGES FACING ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN DUE
TO HIV&AIDS AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR SOCIAL LIFE

BY

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Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for Degree.

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Year: 2015

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the researcher investigated the impact of HIV and AIDS to orphans and vulnerable children in Vhembe District, Thulamela Municipality, Limpopo province. In South Africa HIV&AIDS is the major cause of deaths, thus contributing to increased number of orphans and vulnerable children. The prevalence of HIV in children under 18 years has nearly doubled from 1.2% in 2000 to 2.1% in 2009, with its prevalence in children under five increasing from 2.2% to 3.6% in the same period. According to the Maternal Orphans Surveillance Study it is reported that maternal orphans has increased from 102,088 in 2003 to 159,062 in 2008 and slow down to 102,088 in 2011. Furthermore, some in depth studies reveal the vulnerabilities and risks orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV face. National Action Plan for Orphans, other children and Youth made Vulnerable by HIV and TB, (2012-2016). In Thulamela Municipality there are 43 Drop in Centers funded by the Department Social Development which are providing integrated services to Orphans and Vulnerable Children, so far the municipality have 3776 OVC who are receiving services from the Drop in Centers with 276 Community Care givers who are providing the services.

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used and both deductive and inductive interpretations were used in this study. Self-administered Questionnaire (Appendix C) and interview (Appendix D) were handed out to the sampled CCG to complete by responding to the questions indicated on the instruments of collecting data.

The study's main findings are as follows:

- The majority of orphans and vulnerable children are not financially secured as a result of poverty and lack of parental support.
- Many children depend upon Social Welfare Services for their daily survival.
- Lack of resources and care affected the psychological wellbeing of those children and were also reported to have signs of depression and anxieties. Most of them have social stigma and do not relate well with their friends because they do not have time to play with them. Instead they are catapulted into the world of adulthood and robbed of the joys of childhood at a very tender stage as they are taking full responsibilities of the family
- It was also revealed that even though some children are infected or affected by HIV&AIDS and lack parental guidance they are still performing well at school but

with others dropping from school.

The recommendations of the study are:

- Department of Social Department should assist the families by giving the information to increase their knowledge to access social grants and other financial services. Foster care, adoptions, alternative placements and guardianship arrangements should be facilitated at an early stage for parental and supervision guidance.
- Social welfare services should be strengthened to address the daily needs of the OVC.
- Psychological services and resources available should be directed to the children's psychological well-being. Addressing discrimination, stigmatization and disclosures and counseling to address their psychological needs
- Department of Social Development has duties or task of ensuring that educational, training and recreational needs are met. Ensure that children attend school and restore normal schooling where it has been interrupted.

To the other researchers

It is recommended that a similar study be conducted using an in-depth interviewing method of information gathering to enable further probing in order to receive more information and inputs from other respondents and municipality.