

**ASSESSING CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF STREET CHILDREN:
THE CASE OF GEFERSA GUJE SUB- CITY**

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Abstract

There are large numbers of children living or spending most of their life on the street. Children living on the street face numerous problems. Different studies conducted in different parts of Ethiopia confirmed that street children face numerous problems which include: psychological, health, social and economic problems. This study has conducted in Gefersa Guje Sb-City of Shaggar city. It has been conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research method. The data of the study collected from 36 participants who took part differently in In-depth interviews and distributing questionnaire for others. Key informant interviews have been conducted to collect data from government officials who are knowledgeable on the situation of street children. Purposive sampling method has used for selecting participants and 5 in-depth interview have been used for the study. The study finding revealed that street children in the study area have been facing diversified challenges and economic and health related challenges are the widely observed one in the study area. Furthermore, this study also assessed the coping strategies or mechanisms employed by street children of the study area and respondents use different mechanism in order to overcome different challenges that they have been facing. Among those strategies, the respondents use scavenging, begging, leftover from hotel and stealing to withstanding the economic challenges and some of the respondents showed behaviour of seeking health services in nearby government health post. In general, this study could serve as baseline information to further conduct another intensive research on other challenges of the street children and some coping strategies in the study area.

Key words: Street children, streetism, challenges, coping strategies

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	5
Chapter One	8
1. Introduction	8
1.1. Background of the Study.....	8
1.2. Statement of the problem	11
1.3. Objectives of the study.....	14
1.3.1. General objective of the study	14
1.3.2. Specific objectives of the study	14
1.4. Research Questions	14
1.5. Significance of the Study	15
1.6. The scope of the study.....	15
1.7. Definition of key terms	15
1.8. Organization of the study	16
CHAPTER TWO	17
2. Review of Related Literature.....	17
2.1. The Concept of Street Children.....	17
2.2. Theoretical Framework	18
2.2.1. Social Network Theory	18
2.2.2. Resilience Theory	19
2.3. Factors that Contribute to Streetism among Children	20
2.4. Challenges Faced by Street Children	21
2.5. Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Street Children.....	22
2.6. Trends to Children and Children on the Street of Ethiopia.....	23
CHAPTER THREE	26
3. Research Methodology.....	26
3.1. Introduction	26
3.2. Study Area.....	26
3.3. Research Design.....	26

3.4. Research approach.....	27
3.5. Target Population	27
3.6. The Sampling Technique	27
3.6.1. Sample Size determination	28
3.7. Sources of Data	29
3.8. Tools for data collection.....	29
3.8.1. Questionnaires.....	29
3.8.2. Interviews.....	29
3.8.3. Observation.....	29
3.9. Reliability and Validity.....	30
3.10. Data Analysis.....	30
3.11. Ethical Considerations.....	31
Chapter Four	31
4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion	31
4.1 Introduction.....	31
4.2 General Characteristics of the Respondents	32
4.3. Challenges of access to basic needs.....	36
4.4. Housing situation of street children	42
4.5. Coping strategies of street children.....	49
Chapter Five.....	54
5. Conclusion and Recommendation	54
5.1. Conclusion	54
5.2. Recommendations.....	55
Reference	56

List of Tables

Table	page
Table 1. Demographic characteristics of sample respondent -----	33
Table 2. Age of the respondent with sex of the respondents-----	35
Table 3. Birth place of the respondents -----	35
Table 4: religion of the respondents -----	36
Table 5. Educational level of the respondents -----	37
Table 6: for how long have you lived in the street -----	37
Table 7: Are you assured of getting daily basic need -----	38
Table 8: what types of work are you doing in the street -----	39
Table 9: main sources of daily meal -----	40
Table 9: main sources of daily meal of respondents -----	42
Table 10: how many times do you usually eat in a day -----	42
Table 11: main sources of cloth -----	45
Table 12: Housing situation of street children -----	45
Table 13: Do you suffer from any disease -----	47
Table 14: disease/illness frequently experienced by street children -----	48
Table 15: Whether respondents fall sick by housing condition -----	49
Table 16: health facility accessed by respondents -----	50
Table 17: activities accomplished by street children as coping strategies of economic challenges -----	52

Table 18: Whether the street children have rules and regulations that guide their sleeping arrangement -----	53
Table 19: Street children's best survival tactic in street life -----	53
Table 20: do you use any kind of substance as coping mechanism to street life -----	54
Table 21: type of substance you use -----	55
Table: 22 Do you wish to go home someday -----	55

List of Figures

Figure	page
Figure 1: sex and age of respondents -----	36
Figure 2: Place of birth and ethnic group of the respondents -----	38
Figure 3: main source of daily meal -----	43
Figure 4: how many times street children eat in a day -----	45
Figure 5: sleeping condition of street children -----	47
Figure 6: place of sleeping of street children -----	48
Figure 7: street children suffering from stomach ache -----	49
Figure 8: Expense of health services of street children -----	52
Figure 9: best survival tactic in street life -----	55
Figure 10: types of substance street children use -----	57
Figure 11: whether street children wish to go home someday -----	58

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CSA: Central Statistics Agency

MoLSA: Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

UNICEF: United Nations International Children and Emergence Fund

UNYC: United Nations Year of the Child

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations

FSCE: Forum on street children in Ethiopia

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Throughout the world in general and in Africa in particular witnessing rapid and wide-ranging of socio- economic and political changes with both positive and negative consequences, from which the negative consequences of this changes lead to large number of children to end up on the street (Kopoka, 2000). Over the last five decades, the phenomenon of street children has become prominent globally with serious implications for the survival of these children (Kopoka, 2000). The presence of street children in major cities of the world has transcended the level where it was viewed as strictly uncommon occurrence to a worrisome global problem (Ler oux, 1998). Worldwide, the problem of children roaming the streets endlessly is escalating and alarming (Ler oux, 1998). According to Owalabi (2015) children living in the streets in the world have been a challenge over immemorial time. Throughout their history, children living in the streets are there precisely because they actively choose it as a better option than staying in the family home.

De brito (2014) describes street children as a major social problem in some countries and the importance to acknowledge the issue. To change global development of the problems with street

children, the problem must first be highlighted. According to UNICEF (De Brito, 2014) there are tens of millions of street children all around the world.

Giddens (2014) describe that most people in today's society see childhood in a process of becoming an adult. Childhood includes a content of social and structural positions in different communities depending on where a child is growing up. Childhood is nowadays no longer a universal social construction; it depends on the experiences a child gets in the society. The sociology has left the functional perspective of childhood and has begun to see children as active participants in constructing their own lives in society. Giddens (2014) writes that children whom are exposed to physical and physical violence at home do not have the luxury of a caretaking family. The life of a street child is a life of constantly trying to survive on the street.

Street children's living situation is filled with difficulties and often related with drug abuse, violence, crime, family disruption, abandonment, disease, prostitution, and so forth (De Brito, 2014). According to Ward and Seger (2010) is there a lack of knowledge and information about how to change street children's situation for the better especially concerning methods and strategies of how to deal with these children.

Street children are among the poorest of the poor segments of society (Bhaskaran & Mehta, 2011). In the study conducted in Zambia (Harju, 2013), it was indicated that the problem of street children is not limited to financial aspect rather it manifests itself in form of susceptibility to 'exploitation, crime, violence; negative perception by the society; lack of access to different services, substance abuse, feeling wasted and etc. It was also argued in the same study that these problems are far more severe among female street children compared to their male counterparts.

Different factors have contributed for children leaving homes to live on the street. There are many, often overlapping, reasons why children are lead to the street; they can be loosely grouped into push factors within the household and pull factors on the street. Push factors understood as all external factors to the child, which force the child to abandon the family environment and decide to live on the streets. These factors may be related to the family, community and societal relationship that he/she has been in contact with. Pull factors (seen as all those elements which attract the child to the street) for street life are by definition the main elements that influence the

child to decide to take up street (Miguel, 2010). However, these factors vary from context to context and they should not be seen in general terms (Miguel, 2010).

Despite the existence of the problem of street life in several countries, its size, nature and cause varies from country to country depending on the level of economic development, cultural and traditional setting, institutional interventions and the level of social harmony and peace (Kibrom, 2008). All forms of violence against children including physical or mental, injury, abuse, neglect and maltreatment, deprivation and exploitation, including sexual abuse which leads children to leave their home and become on street (MoLSA, 2005).

UNICEF (2000) annual State of the World's Children report have for many years highlighted the extremely difficult circumstances in which children live and work on the streets. Children living on the streets are denied their basic human rights as they have no access to food, shelter, education and health care and are exposed to many forms of discrimination and abuse (Retrack, 2012). Children on the street are both spatially and socially oppressed, through multiple forms of social control, marginalization, and powerlessness. As a result, everyday life for a street child can be like living in an enemy territory (Hutchison, 2010 in Mahiderhiwot, 2014). They are outcasts, invisible members of the society whose lack of protection sets them at greater risk of facing diverse forms of abuse, exploitation, violation and deprivation of their right. Albeit children on the street can be exceptionally visible in their features, then again their invisibility in society suggests a rather paradoxical conception. This is because children on the street are shadows existing in society whose rights are not only violated but their presence is also denied and excluded by the general public (UNICEF, 2006). In addition to these, the negative impressions from the society or public arise not only against the children themselves but also to their parents (Anna, 2015).

Studies found that children who usually reside in the street were involved in begging, hawking, prostitution, and theft. These activities provide them money for daily needs. The reality is that millions of children around the world live in the street and only few people and organizations are doing something about it. This lukewarm, or rather, passive response to the problem of street children is a trend that needs attention.

The importance of understanding the lives and roles of children from different culture perspectives cannot be overemphasised as children from these cultures experience different childhood development (Tuladhar, 2013). Devi (2016) notes that street children are at risk for physical, emotional, social, and cognitive violation. He further stated that street children represent a rapidly growing socio-educational challenge affecting both developing and industrialized nations of the world.

According to Child Hope, an Non-Governmental Organization (hereafter, NGO) working with children on the street in Ethiopia, children on the street have become a countrywide epidemic, with over 100,000 children living and/or working on the streets of Ethiopian cities (Kibrom, 2008). However, UNICEF (2000) estimates that the problem may be far more serious, with nearly 600,000 children on the street country wide and over 100,000 in Addis Ababa.

In Ethiopia, the phenomenon of street children has become a critical social problem in most cities and towns throughout the country. The problem is mainly caused by miserable poverty, rapid urbanization and family abuse (Adugna, 2006). The level and magnitude of the problem have been increasing through time as a result of which street children become a major character of nearly every city and town of Ethiopia (Adugna, 2006). According to Mahderehiwot (2014), numerous factors such as break down of social network, drought and famine, armed conflict, rural-urban migration and rapid urbanization that is now going on in most parts of the country are the main factors that expose children to street life. Mahderehiwot also stressed that despite many similarities shared by most urban centres of the country, streetism among children in Ethiopia and the problems they face vary from one urban centre to another with Addis Ababa taking the lead followed by Adama in Oromia, Gonder in Amhara regional state and Awassa in Southern Nation and Nationalities regional state.

Therefore it is important to explore challenges faced by street children and coping strategies of children living in the street of the study area.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The problem of street children is a worldwide phenomenon since these children exist in every part of the world. According to the report by FSCE, children leave their home for various reasons and start living on the street in most urban cities. The vast majorities of these children work and

live in large, urban areas of developing countries. Some of the street children are part of entire families who live on the street (FSCE, 2003). According to Mekonnen (2011), streetism is becoming one of the major challenges of all urban areas of Ethiopia. The capital city Addis Ababa is among the cities that are highly affected by the problem of street children.

Children on the street are a global phenomenon, South American, Asia, and African countries are more affected by the problem (Lalor, 1999). However, its size, nature and cause vary from continent to continent, country to country, society to society and even from one child to the other depending on the level of economic development, cultural and traditional setting, institutional interventions and the level of social harmony and peace (Kibrom, 2008). Therefore, identifying factors leading to children on the street is crucial in finding a solution to the problem (Kopoka, 2000).

The factors that lead children to the street and childhood marginalization in Ethiopia are as complex as socio-economic, political and cultural situation (Tatek, 2000). Moreover, children on the street's existence is directly and indirectly influenced by the society, and this is also influenced by other global elements. These influences are reciprocal and are not only one way (Miguel, 2010). It is because of these global, local and communal aspects influencing children on the street's lives that we can find some similarities and differences in children on the street's push and pull factors (Miguel, 2010).

With the help of different studies carried out on streets, it can be argued that children on the street are a well-known topic in academic discussion not only in a certain part of the globe but all over the world. However, the areas may have their own unique purpose that also depends on the interest of the research organizations and individual. There are many literatures on the phenomenon of children on the street in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa) which focuses on different aspects of street children.

For example the study conducted by Haile Sebrato (2016) explores the life experience of children on the street in Addis Ababa and according to his findings, Children on the street face infinite challenges when they are living on the street among them meeting their basic needs like food, cloth and finding decent and secure sleeping places, lack of access to services such as health, education and recreation are some of them. Redea Tesfaye (2015) also investigated the

perceptions of the community about children on the street in Addis Ababa. He indicated absence of social exclusion, and the presence of positive perception to children on the street. It is concluded albeit the community supported children on the street in different ways; it did not bring prolonged change on their life.

Mahiderhiwot Abebe (2014) also explores the life experience of children on the street in the rehabilitation program in Kirkos sub city in Drop in Rehabilitation Center Project. In her findings, mutual supporting groups with peers is one of the main coping strategy children on the street use among the different coping mechanisms while they are on the street as well as the rehabilitation centre. Girmachew Adugna (2006) in his paper explores the meaning and role of churches for children who make a living on street based activities in Addis Ababa. According to this study, Churches have immense potential in building children's spiritual life through spiritual teaching.

Tatek Abebe (2009) explores Ethiopian children's perspectives on begging as a way of life in Addis Ababa. Based on seven months of ethnographic fieldwork, the author discusses the social and economic significance of begging to otherwise impoverished children, and explores what they beg for, as well as how and why. Tigist Hailu (2010) analyzes the situation of girls living and working on the streets of Addis Ababa by identifying the resources and services available to them. According to her findings girls face extremely harsh conditions including sexual abuse by adults, rape, unwanted pregnancy and early motherhood.

Seblewongel Yitbarik (2012) explores the problems and survival strategies of female children on the street between 14 and 17 years living and/or working on the street in selected places of Addis Ababa. This study shows that the living condition of female children on the street remains —horrible and they are exposed to different kinds of problems. As a consequence of their involvement on street life which in turn makes them available for easy prey by different abusers, they were victims of various forms of sexual abuse.

Although different studies were conducted on the cause, problems, life experience of children on the street and survival strategies of street children in Ethiopia, almost all of them focused on the capital, Addis Ababa and few towns and cities of the country and limited studies have been done on the challenges faced by street children and coping strategies. Furthermore, while street

children in Ethiopia do not make a homogeneous group, (Girmay, 2007) there is a need for research studies to be conducted at various localities to understand and grasp their challenges and coping strategies on that particular environmental context. Hence, with this intention, this study was conducted to fill the research gap stated above by investigating the challenges faced by children living in the street and coping mechanism in the study area. Along with this, the life of the children on the street that researcher perceived in a day to day life in the study area caught attention to do this research. Centre of attention in this study is children on the street between the ages of 9 to 17. This is done on the belief that those children above the age of 9 can easily understand and appropriately respond to the interview questions.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. General objective of the study

The overall objective of this study is to assess challenges faced by children living in the street and their coping mechanism in Gefersa Guje City

1.3.2. Specific objectives of the study

- To assess economic challenges faced by children living in the streets in the study area
- To assess health related challenges faced by children living in the streets in the study area
- To identify local coping mechanisms against economic challenges of children on the street in the study area
- To identify local coping mechanisms against health challenges of children on the street in the study area

1.4. Research Questions

This study will be being attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are economic challenges faced by children living in the streets in the study area
2. What are health related challenges faced by children living in the streets in the study area
3. What are local coping mechanisms against economic challenges of children on the street in the study area
4. What are local coping mechanisms against health challenges of children on the street in the study area

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study has considered to be significant because it will give awareness about the problems facing street children, their coping strategies and their future life at large. Policy makers will be aware about how street children are found and this will help to come up with mechanisms to tackle the problem of street children. Not only rising awareness to all stake holders but also the findings of this study will add knowledge to society about the problems that are faced by children living in the streets and their coping strategies will be also assessed.

Furthermore this study will help to develop social services provision in our society so as to minimize chaos that will be brought by street children in communities. In addition, this study will provide the foundation for further research on issues related to street children

1.6. The scope of the study

This study has investigated the challenges of street children and their coping mechanism in Gefersa Guje sub-City only. Generally, four thematic areas will be identified in line with the objectives of the study: first, to explore economic challenges faced by children living in the streets in the study area, second, to describe health related challenges faced by children living in the streets in the study area third, to identify local coping mechanisms against economic challenges of children on the street in the study area, fourth, identify local coping mechanisms against health challenges of children on the street in the study area.

1.7. Definition of key terms

Street children- In this study, street children refer to children who are homeless (Mazikana, 2018). These street children are not taken care of by their parents, family and they usually live in abandoned buildings, parks, containers, or on the street.

Child abuse- This is denial of child rights Family status-According to this study family status may mean family living arrangements, also it is used to refer to the type of family. **Poverty-** This is defined as lack of access to basic needs for survival such as food, shelter, clothing, health and education.

Children living on the streets: Street children, meaning people under the age of 18 who spend most of their time either living or working on the street, have more than likely experienced family trauma, hunger, neglect, and domestic violence

1.8. Organization of the study

Chapter One gives the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, purpose of the study, justification of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, definition of key terms, and the organization of the study.

Chapter two focuses on the review of related literature. The study will explore challenges faced by children living in the streets and coping mechanism in response to the problems they encounter and bring an evaluation of solutions for challenges being faced by children living in the streets.

Chapter Three presents the methodology adopted in this study. Therefore the research philosophy, the research approaches and the research designs appropriate for this study are presented and discussed. The sampling process, data collection methods, the population for this study, quality control issues and data analysis procedures are given and described in detail.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. The Concept of Street Children

Over three quarters and as many as 90% of the children on the streets in various developing countries work on the streets but live at home and are working to earn money for their families (Ennew, 1986). The term „street children“ came into general use after the United Nations Year of the Child (UNYC) proclamation in 1979 (Mayhew, 1968). The proclamation was aimed at drawing attention to problems affecting children throughout the world such as malnutrition, lack of access to education and other basic child rights (UNESCO, 2008). Before the proclamation in 1979, street children were referred to as homeless, abandoned or runaways (Scanlon, Tomkins, Lynch & Scanlon, 1998). Cosgrove, (1990) has used two dimensions to define street children: the degree of family involvement and the amount of deviant behaviour.

According to Cosgrove's (1990) argument, a street child is “any individual under the age of majority whose behaviour is predominantly at variance with community norms, and whose primary support for his/her development needs is not a family substituted.” Benitez, (2003) comments that, there is no universally accepted definition of street children and several interpretations are in common use. UNICEF, (1997) managed to concretely delineate three categories of street children: Children „on“ the streets, Children „of“ the streets and Children for the street (UNICEF, 1997). Chukwuma and Aniekwe, (2011) points out that this is a pitiable situation of out-of-school/street children where they alert the interest and the attention of many Non- Governmental and International Organizations which get involved in the rehabilitation, rescuing and returning of street children.

According to Lalor (1999) children on the street are a heterogeneous population, there are three main categories: (1) children at risk the largest group of in this typology. These are the children of the urban poor and they form the reservoir from which children on the street emerge. (2) Children on the street as those children who came to the streets to work in order to supplement their family's income, and they will return home to their families at night time. (3) Children of the streets who have been the street are their main living place. Family ties may exist but are remote and their former home is visited infrequently.

The term „street children“ is controversial; some authors choose not to adopt it and instead use alternative terms. For example, Dallape, (1996) uses the term „community children“, emphasizing that street children are part of the world community (Soale, 2004). Ennew, (2003) on the other hand, points out that some African countries have created their own synonym for the word „street children“. For example, the term „urban out-of school children“ that is used in Kampala or the word „skadukinders“ (Afrikaans for shadow children) that is used in Johannesburg (Ennew, 2003). Another commonly used term is „Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances“, with the acronym CEDC. Ennew points out that although this term used to refer to a group that includes refugees, children with disabilities, children affected by organized violence and unaccompanied children in disasters, CEDC now seems to be almost synonymous to the term „street children“ (Ennew, 2003). However, UNICEF, (2001) defines a street child as any girl or boy for whom the street in the wildest sense of the word (including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults” (International Catholic Children’s Bureau, 1985). Children of the street could be the concept that the researcher have adopted in this study.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study will be supported by both the resilience and the social network theory. Kvale, (2009) observes that developing of a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the phenomena to be explored, establishes the base to which new knowledge is added and incorporated. This theory therefore explains the situation of street children way of life in the streets.

2.2.1. Social Network Theory

The theory was propounded by John Barnes in 1954; Social network theory is the study of how the social structure of relationships around a person, group, or community affects beliefs or behaviours. It assumes that relationships are important hence maps and measures formal and informal relationships to understand what facilitate or impede the knowledge flow that binds interacting units. Casual pressures are inherent in any structure. Network analysis provides ways for detecting and measuring the magnitude of these pressures. It focuses on the relationships between people, rather than on characteristics of people. These relationships may comprise the feelings people have for each other, the exchange of information, polity, order or more tangible exchanges such as goods, money and other possessions.

In relation to the study, social network theory provides conceptual and methodological guide to the research on elements of social structures, networks of relationships and how to measure them in the target population. As Pattison, (1981) puts it in Ayuku et al. (2003), “the structure of this collective consists of the other persons (network members) and ties that give shape and substance to the fulfilment of the key person’s focal basic psychological needs and this structure can be divided into various groups.” The street children individually draw support from one another hence fulfilling their goals.

According to Aptekar (1988), Campos et al. (1994) and Evans (2006) street children get into groups or form social networks and use them to meet their basic needs. Nevertheless, street children experience very different social networks and daily activities because they live in an environment of decreased adult presence and intervention. Street children befriend other street children, individuals and institutions they consider beneficial to their survival. The relationship they get from their peers and the public in general fills a gap that they could not get from their families. They rely on one another for money, food, love, encouragement, security and emotional support. The social network theory refers to how street children’s network has the ability to perform functions that are usually fulfilled by the family. The limitation of this theory is that it does not recognize that even with the presence of networks, street children have to bear a lot of hardship as individuals in the streets. Therefore, resilience theory complements the social network theory.

2.2.2. Resilience Theory

Resilience theory is a multifaceted field of study that has been addressed by social workers, psychologists, sociologists, educators and many others over the past few decades. In short, resilience theory addresses the strengths that people and systems demonstrate that enable them to rise above adversity. It has its roots in the study of children who proved resilient despite adverse childhood environments. Resilience theory refers to a dynamic positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity. This theory was propounded by Norman Garnezy in 1971. He stated two resilience phenomena as good outcomes in high – risk children, sustained competence in children under stress and recovery from trauma. He further states that children who experience chronic adversity far better or recover more successfully when they have positive relationship with a competent adult, they are good learners and problem solvers and have areas of competence and perceived efficacy valued by self or society. Human beings are not passive

recipients of their environmental stimuli (e.g., internal and external), instead they seek out environments consequent to their experiences (Tarter & Vanyukov, 1999). Some factors such as social support and family cohesion are considered to contribute towards positive adaptation; however, it is plausible that individuals' contribution to these factors may confer upon them the status of resilience. For instance, a resilient person may have an ability to seek and extract support from others as well as enhance his/her social support.

Similarly, a person may contribute to the cohesion of his/her family (Hoge, Austin, & Pollack, 2007). Hence it is not the mere availability of support, but it is the active engagement of a person with the relationships which may have the protective effects of resilience. This is where the concept of human agency arises in relation to the construct of resilience. The street children display a lot of resilience owing to the fact that they are still children yet able to get their needs met by extracting support from others as well as enhancing their own social support (Buzaare, 2021).

The resilience theory would be used to guide this study as the main theory with its focus on a dynamic positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity. Resilience theory further helped focus on person's ability to seek and extract support from others as well as enhance his/her social support. In addition social network theory also will be used as additional guiding principle since it also focuses on relationships which includes the feelings people have for each other, the exchange of information, polity, order or more tangible exchanges such as goods, money and other possessions.

2.3. Factors that Contribute to Streetism among Children

Adeyemi and Oluwaseun (2012) investigated the cultural factors promoting streetism among urban children in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria and three cultural factors were identified; namely, family structures, societal customs and modernization. With the family structures, the authors found that parents giving birth to many children contribute to larger family sizes which puts a huge burden on the parents in terms of providing for their children. These findings were similar to that of Awatey (2014) which found that about 90 per cent of the children in his study on the streets in Kumasi, Ghana were not attending school. The study further showed that the major reason for children being on the streets was the need to work in order to get money to support

their household income since about 50 percent indicated that they had no support from family members in terms of food, education, clothing and other basic needs.

Studies conducted in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka by Ojo, (2013), Abebe (2009) and Senaratna and Wijewardarna (2013) respectively, report breakdown in family structure as a cause of streetism. Abebe (2009) argues that majority of children found in the street were due to divorce or separation which leads to family disintegration. Also, Abebe (2009) further contends that these children lived in the street as a result of large family size ranging from four to six members per household. This situation, when coupled with the lack of a steady income, leads children to perform whatever kind of work they find in the street. Similar findings were observed by Chireshe, Jadezweni, Cekiso and Maphosa (2010) in South Africa and in Nigeria by (Alenoma, 2012; Ojo, 2013). The South African study found that divorce and the death of parents of children left more children abandoned in the street to fend for themselves. On their part, Senaratna and Wijewardarna's (2013) study conclude that poor family functioning and disadvantaged socio-economic conditions initiate children into the street and kept them there. Contributing factors identified in this study include death, illness, imprisonment of one or both parents, alcohol/substance abuse, being born in the street, single parent families, extreme poverty, and lack of education and occupational skills of parents.

2.4. Challenges Faced by Street Children

Rabia and Mohammed (2015) investigated the experiences of street children in Pakistan and discovered that street children in Pakistan face a lot of challenges in the street including: lack of shelter (which made them vulnerable to all ranges of bad weather conditions), abuse and exploitation by the police. The abuse, exploitation and harassment by police were also reported as well in Bangladesh (Pratibha, Mathur & Ansu, 2016) and in India by Chande (n.d). Illnesses (e.g., malaria, tuberculosis, anemia, malnutrition and vitamins deficiency) and health problems due to unclean and unhygienic water and sanitation issues as well as unhygienic working conditions and lack of proper care are all aspects of the challenges street children face (Chande, n.d; Pratibha, Mathur & Ansu, 2016).

And, since they do not earn money on a regular basis, many of the children stay without food by fasting, some depended on food in garbage (Hai, 2014); they buy cheap food, take drugs and

have sex for money (Ray, Davey & Nolan, 2011). Most of the children have only one cloth, which is most of the time torn, dirty and undersized/oversized (Hai, 2014).

2.5. Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Street Children

In a total of 50 street children studied in Accra-Ghana, (Awatey, 2014) found that about 20% of children who moved to the street to supplement their family income relied on their family for daily meal. The findings also showed that some of the street children begged for food (in restaurants and hotels) similar to findings by Abebe (2009) in Addis Ababa and Lugalla and Mbawambo (1999) in urban Tanzania; and some scavenged (Awatey, 2014) or ate from bins (Chireshe et al., 2010) in South Africa. But, 62% of Awatey (2014) participants bought their own food because they worked and earned some income in the street. This finding is similar to that of Julie and Seipel (2007). Among those who bought their own food, Kebede (2015) found that about 83% of street children in Ethiopia bought leftover food, 48% bought cheap food from small cafes and 39% depended on leftover food from restaurants to cope with street life. Julie and Seipel (2007) also found that children who lived in the streets of Ghana also relied on each other for money, protection, encouragement and emotional support; similar to a South African study by (Msocsci, Meyer-weitz & Asante; 2016) and (Malindi & Cekiso (2014) in Tanzania; while some relied on social service assistance provided by non-governmental organizations. Others say they simply rely on God and hope for better life in the future (Awatey, 2014; Msocsci, Meyer-weitz & Asante; 2016).

Additionally, to cope with street life, some of the children used drugs and alcohol (Msocsci, Meyer-weitz & Asante; 2016) on the street of Durban, South Africa while others, also in South Africa, used social distancing surviving strategy by removing themselves from certain social groups and developing anti-social coping mechanisms in the form of attitudes and outlooks such as non-discriminating and intense distrust of others Kolar, Erickson and Stewart (2012). Also, participants developed self-defense and resilience mechanisms in order to cope with experiences of violent attacks (Kolar, Erickson & Stewart; 2012). A study done in the United Kingdom reported that street children used shoplifting, burglary, stealing cars, selling drugs, selling sex and begging as means for survival (Smeaton, 2009). Some also disclosed joining gangs in order to get protection from other gangs and individuals in their areas. To cope with their health challenges, Fiasorgbor and Fiasorgbor (2015) indicate that the children sought treatment from

friends, herbalist, as well as used self-medication. Similarly, in Tanzania, Amury and Komba (2010) found that children self-medicate, sought for traditional healers' services and sometimes slept off their illness.

2.6. Trends to Children and Children on the Street of Ethiopia

Children's working, living and surviving on the street is a global problem, affecting developed and developing countries alike; however, the magnitude of the problem varies. With less developed countries facing more acute problems. The children on the street are marginalized children who require enormous assistance but they are often least assisted in a society (UNICEF, 2012 in Mahiderhiwot, 2014).

Children's street life has globally been receiving the attention of governmental and non-governmental organization, including research institute. However, prior to the 1990's developmental theory with psychology and sociology dominated research, focusing on dysfunction, pathology, and psychological breakdown among young people on the street (Ennew and Swart Kruger, 2003). According to CSC (2009), in Ethiopia, the attempts of —Clean up or 'removing' children from the street have been made by both the previous and the current government. The children on the street had round up by the police force and were dropped in remote forests. Several organizations work to help these children that include interventions towards children on the street in their programs, but the amount still increases every year (Mahiderhiwot, 2014). Theses evidence shows, the problem of children on the street is not the case that should left to one organization. Efforts should be made by different stakeholder's, government, non-governmental organization and community based organization and by the public at large. All stakeholders need to work hand in hand in order to alleviate the multifaceted problem of these children (Mahiderhiwot, 2014).

The government of Ethiopia is conducting a campaign through state-run media to make the public aware of the true nature of the problems children are facing on the streets, at different levels starting from the federal to regional through local level. The government has also good working relationships with different child- oriented NGO's, such as UNICEF, save the children Sweden, and Italian cooperation project staring from prevention of the problem to rehabilitation of children on the street. There activities are mainly concerned with the provision of education, health, saving and credit, skill training, reintegration, and shelter services (Kaleab, 2016).

Because of legally situated position of the government to provide regulative and coordinative capabilities of interventions, as Ennew (1994) argues, the real solution to the problem of streetism lie in the hands of the government, both at local and national level. However, it does not mean that there is no other responsible agent. The community has the responsibility of handing the challenge by, as Kopoka (2000) argues, putting pressure that is being applies to force government action to find a lasting solution to the problem of children on the street and by organizing themselves in to a dynamic force to encounter the problem.

Despite the presence of governmental and non-governmental organizations working with children on the street, there are problems in developing an integrated strategy and plan of action for talking the growing number of children on the streets. The working principles of many organizations are mainly based on the principle of working —for children on the street rather than —with children on the street (Kaleab, 2016). As Panter-Brick (2003) indicated, their approach have focused on addressing issues like the nature of the problem, the effects on children development, and mere provision of service what they deemed as the solution to the children on the street more than working with children's own participation, including their view or possible solution. Study conducted by Miguel (2010), Most of the children on the street's programmes and projects do not look at the contextual and cultural backgrounds. Their interest is more linked to the need to take the children on the street back home, to provide them with basic foods and support for a while, and that it is all. On the other occasions, children on the street are collected from the street and —locked up in rehabilitation centers, without questioning their motivation to be on the street, and their interest in staying in a rehabilitation centre.

However, participation is important principle of the convention for the children on the street. Children on the street, unlike their being usually perceived by the mainstream society, they are mostly knowledgeable about the causes of streetism, the difficult situation of street life and the survival strategies to win their difficulties (Kopoka, 2000). Therefore, offering support to children on the street first requires access to the children and acceptance by them. Building a relationship is an essential prerequisite to any form of aid (Xavier, 2012). However, in Ethiopia, participation of children is very limited both at home and outside (Getnet, 2007).

In order to make the benefits of the interventions sustainable, both government and NGO's should be balanced, providing a short term solution on one hand and working to promote human

development on other hand. However, most of the services provided for the children on the street are mainly focused on providing a short term service to fulfil the immediate needs of the children and to protect them from danger, abuse and exploitation (Ennew, 1994). This may include providing food, shelter, health service, and short term training and counselling opportunities in drop in centres. However, such kind of intervention may not help the children to address their problems sustainably. Therefore, the protection is expected to extend and cover more of long term and proactive approached that will attempt to build support structures for children in order to reduce the vulnerability (Mekonnen, 2011).

In line with the universal notion that children need support, church is an important place for marginalized groups in general and children in particular. Consequently, churches need to target marginalized children and young and embodied them for one and others; one important arena that church needs to address is the problem of getting children on the street and preventing delinquency (Girmachew, 2006). Therefore, teaching marginal children is vital to value and practice spiritual and healthy life style to change their negative sense of self and worthlessness and enriching their daily life (Ibid). Religious attitudes differ among groups, societies and cultures, which form the basis of different values and behavioural practice with in the community and the family environment. This has a direct impact on how the family is constructed, which influences the quality of family life and the attitude and involvement that parents have with their children (Miguel, 2010).

Children who come out to the street are not only due to economic difficulties but also inappropriate treatment by their parents. In order to alleviate the problem, churches need to re-establish relationships with families, and commence a community education program. Preaching or teaching parents and other community members have the potential of transferring the level of responsibility to make a difference on the lives of Marginalized children (Girmachew, 2006). Moreover, the church can help marginal children to pick certain positive values so as to restore the psychosocial and cultural standing as the hall mark of cross (Girmachew, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This section will present research design, sources of data, study population, sample size calculation, sampling procedures, study variables, ethical considerations, data collection techniques, data collection tools, plan for data analysis, procedures and quality control issues.

3.2. Study Area

Gefersa Guje of Shaggar city is found on the western part of the capital city of Ethiopia and Oromia. Gefersa Guje sub-city found to the south of Sululta sub-city and to the east of Holata town. It is also found to the North of Sabeta sub-city. Main economic activities of the residents are business and civil servants. Business activities include shops, hotels, transport, bars, banks bureau and others. Civil servants are scattered all over the areas constituting teachers, policemen, doctors, technicians and lawyers. Oromo the main ethnic groups found in this area. The researcher selected this area since it has a big number of street children and the number is increasing at an alarming rate.

3.3. Research Design

Kothari (2004) defines a research design as an arrangement condition for collecting and analysing data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. In the same line, Aker et al (2002) as cited in Adam and Kamuzora (2008) defined a research design as a detailed blue print used to guide towards its objectives. According to this definition research design is a detailed plan of work to be done to achieve research objectives. Similarly, it is a conceptual structure with which research is conducted; it constitutes the blue print for the collections, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari 2004).

The researcher has employed a cross-sectional research design in terms of time dimension. A cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of the causes, characteristics and challenges of street

children and their coping strategies in the study area. In addition, using cross-sectional design, a holistic picture of street children in Gefersa Guje Sub-city could be obtained (Gall et al., 2005). Furthermore, the study has employed both descriptive and explanatory research designs based on the research objective to conduct the study. This is to gather systematic factual information for descriptive purposes and could enhance the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon to be studied since it gives detail picture of the issue understudy. It also helps to see the association between variables.

3.4. Research approach

The researcher has employed both qualitative and quantitative research approach (mixed research approach) in order to realize the research objectives. The reason is that mixed research approach can appropriately meet the research objective since it helps to gather both qualitative data and quantitative data.

3.5. Target Population

In this research the statistical population to be examined is children living in the streets of Gefersa Guje Sub-city. According to the information obtained from Gefersa Guje Sub-city Women and Children affair's office report (2022), the estimated number of street children in Burayu city is 108 and they are the targeted population in this study. The age range of these street children ranges from 6 years up to 17 years old. Kothari (2004) defines target population as all items or subjects in any field of inquiry. Target population is the entire group of individual, firms, plants or things that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the study. The key informant interviews who have involved in the study are street children and government officials.

3.6. The Sampling Technique

Sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objectives from a population such that the selected group contains elements representatives of the characteristics found in the entire group (Oroth and Kombo, 2002). A sample is a small group drawn from the population in which a researcher is interested in gaining and drawing conclusion about the universe (Kothari, 1992).

Both probability and non-probability sampling methods have employed in the sampling selection process. Simple random sampling was applied as a typical method of probability sampling technique to selects street children and other stakeholders. The reason behind is that the simple

random sample is both the easiest random sample to understand and in simple random sampling, a researcher develops an accurate sampling frame, selects elements from the sampling frame.

Purposive sampling methods has been used as a key non-probability sampling tools in selecting the participants in the study area. The study has employed purposive sampling which entails deliberate selection of cases on the basis of specific qualities (Kothari, 1992). The goal of using purposive sampling is to select individuals who are likely to be information rich with respect to researcher's purposes (Gall et al., 2005).

Key informant interview has also used to collect qualitative data which help to triangulate information collected through other methods. The data have gathered by interviewing some government officials and street children who have better knowledge and experience in the subject matter or in the field.

3.6.1. Sample Size determination

Sample is the exactly number of items selected from a population (Adam and Kamuzora, 2008). It is recommended to use large sample size to be able to generalize the findings. The larger the sample size, the lower the likely error in generalizing to the population. Sulvian (2007) sample size determination formula was used for this study. The formula is written as $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$ where n = Number of samples, N = Total population (108) and e = Error tolerance. Based on sample size determination formula, we can get sample of 85, at 95 % confidence level and 0.05 precision levels. However, due to unavailability of the respondents and time and financial constraint, the researcher forced to select total sample size of 36 children who have participated in the study. Hence, the questionnaires ha distributed for 31 respondents in order to collect quantitative data in the study area. The researcher has selected 5 key informant interviews purposively those individuals who have rich information on the issues and this is based on subjective judgement of the researcher. This qualitative tool used to explore the topic as well as utilize the knowledge and beliefs of the street children and government official about the challenges of street life and their coping mechanisms. Qualitative methods help to find out what the issues are and the nature of the subject.

3.7. Sources of Data

In order to collect reliable data, both primary and secondary sources of data were the major focus of the researcher. To achieve the purpose of this study, the primary data was collected through questionnaire, interview and observation. Secondary sources of data have gathered from different published and unpublished documents, reports, electronic sources, magazines etc.

3.8. Tools for data collection

To collect data the researcher has used interview schedules and questionnaires. For each category of respondents, there was their own instrument designed on the objectives of study. Through interviews and observation checklist, the researcher was able to obtain background information of the respondents as well as their experiences, opinions and knowledge on the subject of inquiry.

3.8.1. Questionnaires

The researcher has employed a questionnaire consists a set of questions that has presented to a respondent for answers. The questionnaire contains questions or variables that discuss the major challenges and coping strategies of street children. In order to collect the necessary information (responses), both closed and open ended questions have developed and incorporated in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in English language and was administered to respondents in a face to face interview. The reason that I prefer to administer in this way is that it usually results in a higher response rate, preferable for survey addressing complex issues where some explanation may be needed and reduces non-response to individual questionnaire items.

3.8.2. Interviews

Face to face interviews are also appropriate in generating information pertaining to the study. The researcher has asked the respondents questions on issues relating to street life and specifically the driving forces behind that situation. Also, in-depth interviews allow street children to explore deeper exploration of opinions, feelings and ideas about what really have caused them being in streets and as well capture their characteristics.

3.8.3. Observation

Observation involves a situation where the researcher presence in a social context is maintained for scientific investigation. The researcher has observed their living arrangements, gender dynamics, used, activities they engage in, division of roles, street children daily chores, their

health seeking behaviour and their coping strategies of street children. Specifically, the researcher has used non-participant observations and the reason is that it could help to verify information produced during interview. The researcher has observed the conditions of 31 respondents while gathering quantitative data.

3.9. Reliability and Validity

Reliability is the extent to which data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings (Sunders 2009). The reliability of an instrument refers to its ability to produce consistent measurement each time. When we administer an instrument under the same or similar conditions to the same population and obtain similar results, we say that the instrument is reliable. The researcher ensures the reliability of the instrument through testing instruments. Based on this an internal consistency reliability test was conducted in Gefersa Guje Sub-city with a sample of 4 respondents and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the instrument was found as 0.68 which is reliable. Although an alpha value of 0.80 or higher is taken as a good indication of reliability for others, Cohen et al.(2007) suggested that it is acceptable if it is 0.67 or above. Since instruments were developed based on research questions and objectives, it is possible to collect necessary data from respondents. Then instruments are consistent with the objectives of the study.

Validity is whether a research instrument is measuring what it set out to measure. Regarding validity, the questionnaire has been given to experts who have judged the appropriateness of the questionnaire to measure important aspects of the study. The researcher incorporated as per the given comments before the final dispatching

3.10. Data Analysis

The study has employed both quantitative and qualitative method of data analysis. The interview schedule was analysed thematically which generated data that required descriptive analysis to back up the qualitative data. In qualitative analysis, the analysis has presented by use of quotes and narrative descriptions. Descriptive analysis has used for quantitative data analysis and it involves derivation of statistical descriptions and interpretation of data by use of descriptive statistics that purely relied on numerical values. In order to establish these statistics, data have coded and analysed using SPSS. The analysed data however have presented in form of frequency tables, pie charts, and percentages.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research can be defined as ensuring that the researcher conforms to the standards of conduct of the authorities in the area of research. Examples of ethical issues that may arise are voluntary participation of respondents, deception to participants, anonymity and confidentiality of information given, analysis and reporting, harm or danger to participants and any other professional code of ethics expected. The researcher was informed the respondents that the instruments being administered is for research purpose only and the responses from the respondents has kept secret and confidential. The researcher can obtain an introductory letter from the University to collect data from the target population. Also, due to sensitivity of some information that has collected, the researcher has showed moral obligation to treat the information with utmost propriety. Further, as the respondents could be reluctant to disclose some information, the researcher has reassured the respondents' confidentiality of the potential information to be given.

Chapter Four

4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results and discussion of the study. The results of descriptive analyses presented using frequency tables and percentages.

Thirteen one questionnaires were distributed for the respondents in the town, out of which thirteen one were completed and retrieved successfully, representing 100% response rate. In addition the researcher has collected qualitative data through interview from 5 participants and overall, 36 street children have been participated in the study.

This section is organized in the following manner: First, the general information about street children were presented and analysed. Second, data collected on challenges and coping mechanism of street children through questionnaires and interviews were analysed concurrently.

4.2 General Characteristics of the Respondents

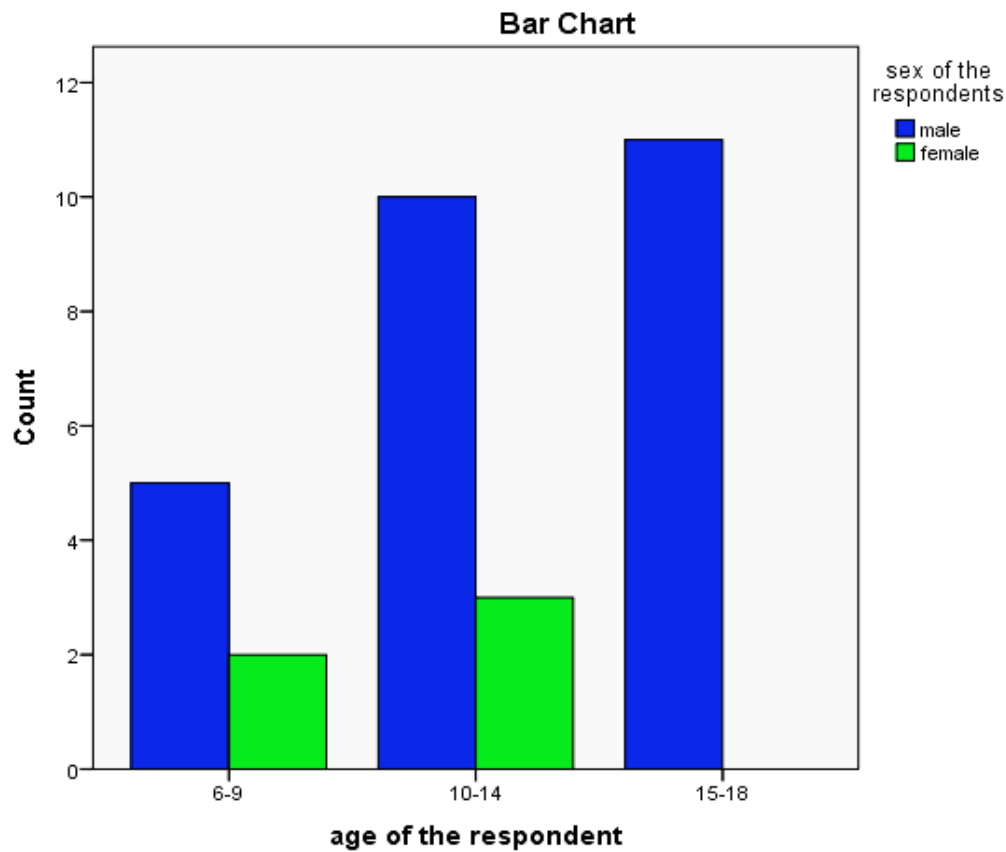
Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the sample respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	26	83.9
	Female	5	16.1
	Total	31	100.0
Age	6-9	7	22.6
	10-14	13	41.9
	15-18	11	35.5
	Total	31	100
Place of Birth	Rural	17	54.8
	Urban	14	45.2
	Total	31	100
Educational status	never attended school	8	25.8
	Read and write only	8	25.8
	1-6	12	38.7
	7-8	3	9.7
	Total	31	100
Religion status	Orthodox	12	38.7
	Muslim	7	22.6
	Protestant	9	29
	Catholic	2	6.5
	Wakefata	1	3.2
	Total	31	100.0
Ethnic group	Oromo	18	58.1
	Amhara	7	22.6
	Gurage	2	6.5
	Walayita	4	12.9
	Total	31	100

Source: field survey, 2023

In this study, a total of 31 street children were participated in Burayu town. Among the participants the majority 83.9% were males and females were 16.1% of the total respondents. And the highest proportion 41.9% (13) of the respondents belong to 10 up to 14 years age groups whereas 15-18 and 6-9 age groups account for 35.5% (11) and 22.6 % (7) respectively.

Figure 1: sex and age of respondents



Source: field survey, 2025

From this result, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the respondents of the study area are male and majority of the street children of the study area are between the age of 10 and 14. Many of the participants in the current study looked significantly younger than their stated ages.

Table 2. age of the respondent with sex of the respondents

		sex of the respondents				Total	
		male		female			
age of the respondent	6-9	5	16.1%	2	6.5%	7	22.6%
	10-14	10	32.3%	3	9.6%	13	41.9%
	15-18	11	35.5%	0		11	35.5%
Total		26	83.9%	5	16.1%	31	100%

Source: field survey 2025

From the above table 2, the majority of the street boys (50%) were aged between 15 and 18 years and only small number of street boy (26.9%) aged between 6 and 9 years in the study area. Of the total female respondents, the majority of street girls (60%) were aged between 10 and 14 years and the remaining 40 % of the street girls were aged between 6 and 9 years in the study area.

This find indicates that boys more likely leave home than girls which may be attributed to prevailing gender role in many part of the country. Whilst girls are commonly socialized for reproductive role and obliged to engage in household chore, their counterpart are socialized in productive role, thus allowed to go on to the street to look for money more likely than girls. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Zena and Komba (2010) which found that boys are more likely to live on the street than girls.

Table 3: birth place of the respondent with ethnic group of the respondents

		ethnic group of the respondents				Total
		Oromo	Amhara	Gurage	Walayita	
birth place of the respondent	rural	10	5	0	2	17
	urban	8	2	2	2	14
Total		18	7	2	4	31

Source: field survey 2025

Place of birth as one variable was assessed in order to know how long the children travelled to be on the street. Hence in their response, street children mentioned that the majority of them came from rural area (54.8%) while the remaining (45.2%) of the total respondent were urban born children. The study result shows that the majority (54.8%) of the respondents are from rural area and 58% of them were from Oromia regional state followed by Amhara regional state (22.6%).

According to figure 2 below, the majority of the study respondents 58.1 % were from Oromo ethnic group, followed by Amahara ethnic group 22.6 %, whereas 6.5 % and 13 % were from the Gurage and Walayita ethnic group respectively. The finding revealed the overwhelming majority of ethnic group in this study were from the Oromo ethnic group.

With respect to religious affiliation of respondents, 38.7% of the respondents were followers of orthodox Christianity, followed by 29 % who were Protestant, 22.6 % were Muslim, 6.5% were Catholic and the remaining 3.2 % were Wakefata. Hence, the majority of street children of the study are from orthodox Christianity and protestant Christianity background.

Table 4: religion of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	orthodox	12	38.7	38.7	38.7
	catholic	2	6.5	6.5	45.2
	protestant	9	29.0	29.0	74.2
	muslim	7	22.6	22.6	96.8
	wakefata	1	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Source: own field survey, 2025

When we look at the educational status of the study participants from below table, about 38.7% of the respondents have attended 1-6 grades, 25.8 % of the respondents have never attended formal school, and about 25.8% read and write only. The remaining 9.7 % have attended 7 or 8 grades whereas. The above finding demonstrated that about 72.2 % of the respondents have got formal education. The finding also indicated that street children who have gone beyond primary level were null. The study also found out that about 25.8% of the respondents have not attended formal education at all.

Table 5: education level of respondents

			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	never attend school		8	25.8	25.8	25.8
	read and write		8	25.8	25.8	51.6

only				
1-6	12	38.7	38.7	90.3
7-8	3	9.7	9.7	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Source: own field survey, 2025

This section analyses the period the respondents have spent on the street. Majority of the respondents spent at most three years in the street. The respondents were asked to assess the variable for how long they lived on the street and the majority of the respondents (61.2%) have lived on the street for 2 up to 4 years and 19.4% between 5 and 7. The remaining 19.4% of the total respondents have lived in the street for less than a year. The finding concurs with the study by Betty (2018) that the majority of the street children 71(74%) have been on the street between 1-3 years.

Table 6: for how long have you lived in the street

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid < 1year	6	19.4	19.4	19.4
2-4 years	19	61.3	61.3	80.6
5-7	6	19.4	19.4	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Source: own field survey, 2025

4.3.Challenges of access to basic needs

Provision of basic needs to the street children creates a sense of self-sufficiency. This section presents the analysis on the street children assurance in getting basic needs on the street. Basic needs were classified as food, shelter and clothing. The summary is illustrated in table 6 below

Table 7: Are you assured of getting daily basic need

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Are you no assured of getting daily basic need?	31	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: field survey 2025

The researcher attempted to assess whether or not the street children of the study area are assured of getting daily needs and the study result shows almost all of them responded as they have no adequate access to basic needs like food and shelter. In incongruity with this finding, the study conducted Betty (2018) found out that majority of respondents 90(90%) were assured of getting basic needs on the street compared to 10(10%) who were not assured. According to the study finding by Betty (2018) those who were not able to get basic needs on the street would go to their friends within their base and share with them whatever they had. One of the participants stated with regard to the inadequacy of basic need specifically food that:

I cannot get adequate food and there is a time in which I could stay without food for a day. But, when I couldn't get something to eat I just go to hotels nearby me and ask for leftover food. Hence, the very challenge that I have been facing is hunger and to overcome it I look for different methods to get food like begging and asking for leftover from hotel. In addition, friends' role is very indispensable in helping each other during hardship by buying food.

From this it is possible to understand that children who are in the street have been facing serious economic problem like lack of food.

Another interviewee added that:

You know food is not enough always for us here. Sometimes if we get breakfast, we are lucky enough. In times, we may spend the whole day without any food at all. Therefore, hunger is the major challenge for street children.

Table 8: what types of work are you doing in the street					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	food vending	8	25.8	25.8	25.8
	Scavenging	6	19.4	19.4	45.2
	selling magazine	7	22.6	22.6	67.7
	rag picking	5	16.1	16.1	83.9
	working in car wash centre	5	16.1	16.1	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Street children in order to survive on the street engage in some activities to earn income in order to provide for their basic needs. Table 7 above shows the kind of income generating activities of street children in the study area.

As per the above table, the majority of respondents involved in food vending activities (25.8%) followed by selling magazine (22.6%) and scavenging which is 19.4 %. The remaining respondents were engaging in rap picking and car washing activities which is 16.1% and 16 respectively. As per the study finding, all the respondents of the study were engaged in various income earning activities, which are mostly temporary and hazardous in nature. The study finding shows that in order to survive of economic challenges faced by street children, they are engaging in different work activities. This finding is similar with the study result conducted by Ibrahim and Mohammed (2021) in Ghana. The study revealed that street children have been engaging in different work activities in order to survive economic challenges that they have been facing. To corroborate this finding, the qualitative finding revealed that:

We, street children, try to involve in different activities in order to earn living and among these activities that we most of the time engage in to buy food are carrying goods and daily labour or manual work in general.

Table 9: main sources of daily meal

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid begging	5	16.1	16.1	16.1
buying	2	6.5	6.5	22.6
leftover from restaurants or hotels	24	77.4	77.4	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey 2025

Among the respondents 77.4 % of the respondents use leftover from restaurants or hotels as a main source of food and begging 16.1 % were the second most common means of accessing food, and the remaining 6.5 % of the respondents mainly access food by buying. From the above table, it is possible to understand that the street children of the study area is collecting leftover

from restaurants or hotels as main coping strategies of economic challenge that they have been facing. Qualitative finding revealed that most of the street children in the study area use leftover from restaurants or hotel as main way of securing their daily food, but they also purchased food from low level tea rooms and local restaurants. One of the interviewee said that:

When we couldn't find any job to work in order to buy food with it, we use mainly leftover from hotels and restaurants. In addition, begging food from generous people is also another source of food for us specially wedding and holidays are very important for us to get our daily meal.

The study finding is in agreement to the study conducted by Azmeraw (2015) which disclosed that the respondents use begging, buying food from the market and leftover from hotels and restaurants as main source of accessing food. Furthermore, the research finding conducted by Delight (2017) established that the street children used begging and scavenging as main coping strategies for life challenge in the street.

According to Table 9, the highest percentage of female respondents 80 % use leftover as main source of food compared to 76.9% male respondents. In the other side 20 % of female respondents use begging as a main source of food compared to only 15.4 % of male respondents and 7.7 % of male respondents use buying as a sources of foods. Thus, females were more likely to have used leftover as main source food while males were more likely to have used buying food from the market as main source of food than female respondents.

Table 9: main sources of daily meal of respondents with sex of the respondents

		sex of the respondents				Total	
		male		female			
main sources of food	Begging	4	15.4%	1	20%	5	
	Buying	2	7.7%	0		2	
	leftover	20	76.9	4	80%	24	
Total		26	100	5	100	31	100

Source: field survey 2025

Finding revealed that 54.8 % of the respondents usually have meals any time they get food whereas 25.8 % of the respondents have food twice a day. And 19.4 % of the respondents usually eat food only once a day. The finding revealed that the overwhelming majority nearly 74.2 % of the total respondents have food once a day and any time they get. Analysis by sex revealed that 57.6% male and 40 % of female respondents usually have food any time they get. About 23 % male and 40 % of female respondents have food twice a day. And 19.2 % male and 20 % female respondents usually have food once a day. Furthermore, since the respondents couldn't get adequate food for their daily consumption, it is possible to conclude that street children of the study area are in serious challenge of nutrition. Congruent to this finding, the study conducted by Delight (2017) shows that children living in the streets face various health challenges because of their lack of access to nutritious food, sanitation, and medical care. According to this study, under-nutrition contributes to child mortality. Street children lack access to nutritious food because many are dependent on leftovers from small restaurants or hotels, food stalls, or garbage bin.

Table 10: how many times do you usually eat in a day?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	once a day	6	19.4	19.4	19.4
	twice a day	8	25.8	25.8	45.2
	any time I get food	17	54.8	54.8	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey 2025

Delight (2017) further added poverty is the major economic challenges faced by children living on the streets, and there are various aspects that define this poverty such as lack of access to health facility, lack of shelter and lack of food that were outlined by these street children. The finding indicated that street children's major challenge is lack of adequate meal per day as majority of them are not getting meal regularly. The finding is in contradiction with a study conducted by Azmeraw (2015) which showed the overwhelming majority 84.9 % of the respondents have food twice and three times a day. The finding is in agreement to a study conducted by Sorsa et al (1999) in which they argued that most street children in Hawassa eat

meals any time they accessed. The finding was also concurring with a study by NCC (2012) in Rwanda in which they discussed that the majority of the respondents 77.2% eat meal once or twice a day. One of the participants revealed that:

There is a day in which we may sleep without eating anything. Sometimes we may eat once in a day and sometimes we may eat twice a day. Hence, we don't access food in regular base as it is for other children. Even the food that we may access is poor in quality and not enough at all. Life in the street is full of challenges and we are struggling to cope up with these challenges using different mechanisms such as engaging in daily labour (Shikala) and loading off and on some goods and construction materials.

From the table below, the vast majority of respondents' source of cloth is collecting discarded clothes (61.3%) followed by begging which is 32.3 % of the total respondents. The remaining respondents 6.4 % sources of cloth are buying and generous donation. The study has assessed to know whether respondents have extra cloth other than the one they have dressed. Hence finding indicated that 93.5 % of the respondents do not have extra cloth whereas 6.5 % of the respondents have extra cloth.

Qualitative finding established that most street children do not have extra cloth. Finding also revealed in most instances when street children are given cloths they prefer to sell it to 'quralleos' that using it for themselves. I have also observed that in my entire stays in the field most street children dress the same cloth beside their cloths are very untidy and has got smell. A respondent said that:

I do not have any cloth other than what I am wearing currently. My friends also do not have extra cloth. It is mainly church which is donating us some cloth to wear. Sometimes church men visit us and provide us food and some cloth.

Table 11: main sources of cloth

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid buying	1	3.2	3.2	3.2
begging	10	32.3	32.3	35.5
getting clothes as generous donations	1	3.2	3.2	38.7

collecting clothes	discarded	19	61.3	61.3	100.0
Total		31	100.0	100.0	

4.4.Housing situation of street children

The respondents also asked about their sleeping condition on the street and majority of them (90.3%) responded that they have been sleeping on the street while the remaining 9.7% of the respondents responded that they sleep at home. Finding indicated that the majority 90.3% of the respondents stay on the street both at the day and night time whereas 9.7% of the respondents stay on the street at the day time and sleep at home.

Table 12: Housing situation of street children

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid in the street	28	90.3	90.3	90.3
at home	3	9.7	9.7	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey 2025

This finding is in agreement to the study conducted by Ngaku (2015) which stated that the majority of the street children spent the nights out there in the street corners, car parks, under bridge and in building under construction. The finding revealed that those children not only work in the street but also live there. This finding also consistent with the findings of Alianza (2000), who estimated that out of 100 million children living in the streets 75% work and live in the streets while only 25% work in the streets but sleep at home or with relatives.

Figure 5: sleeping condition of street children



Furthermore, finding showed that among respondents who were living on the street 64.5% of the respondents usually sleeping on veranda, followed by 29 % of them who were sleeping in building under construction. The respondents also assessed whether or not they pay money to group member and majority of them (83.9%) are not paying money for a group member while 12.9% of the total respondents are paying money for group member. Furthermore, the respondents mentioned that they are supposed to pay it to big boys and the main reason behind paying money for big boy is for the purpose of protection. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Azmeraw (2015) in Nekemte and according to the result, veranda was the main place used for sleeping among respondents who were of the street children and the study conducted by Mulugeta et al.,(2000) in Dessie and they found that among street children who were homeless Veranda were their main sleeping place. However, this finding is varying with a study conducted by Bhaskaran & Mehta (2011) which indicated that in India the overwhelming majority sleep in places such as market places and railway stations, and under bridges/ flyovers. The interview result also revealed that:

Most of the time, we sleep on veranda in front of shops and we sleep in group. We do not have sleeping cloth during night time and it is very challenge for us especially during rainy season.

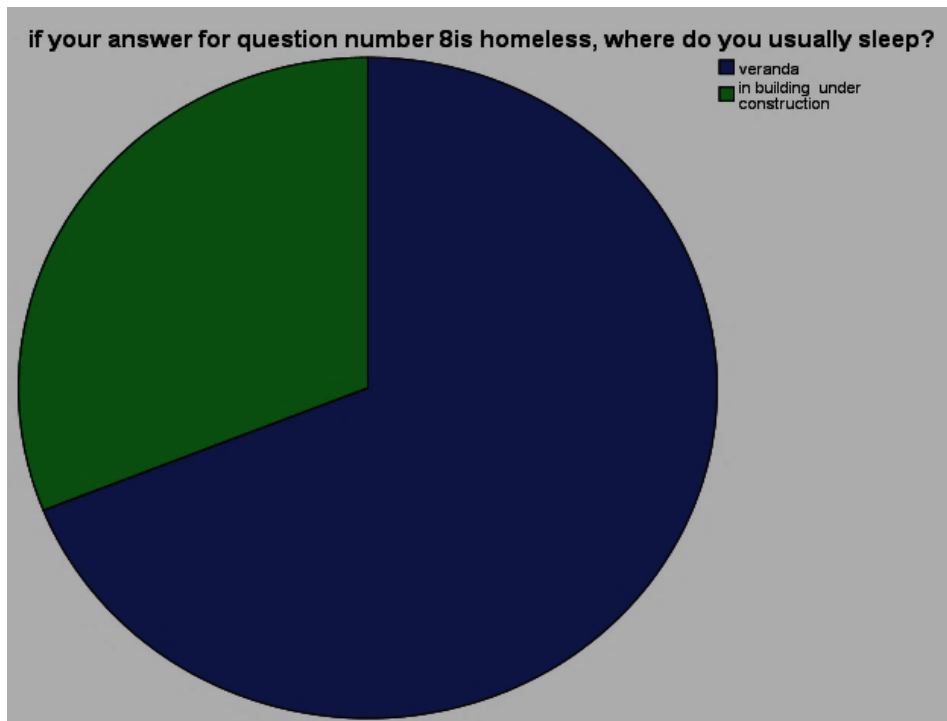


Figure 6: place of sleeping of street children

4.5. Health related challenges

In order to assess the health related challenges of street children and coping strategies used by respondents when street children fall sick, it was important to know if respondents ever been sick. Therefore, the respondents asked whether or not they have suffered from any disease.

Table 13: Do you suffer from any disease?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	29	93.5	93.5	93.5
	no	2	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey 2023

From table 13 above, almost all street children of the study area have suffered from different diseases. About 93.5% of the total respondents responded that they have suffered from diseases while only 6.5 % of the total respondents did not experience any form of diseases. This is in

agreement to the study conducted by Zena and Komba (2010) which established that the majority of the street children had suffered from disease or illness while they are in the street.

In order to assess types of disease that the street children fall sick frequently of, the researcher tried to ask the respondents which sickness they are suffering from. The summary of different disease is provided in below table.

Table 14: disease/illness frequently experienced by street children

Type of disease	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Diarrhoea	16	51.6	14	45.2
Skin disease	5	16.1	25	80.6
Chest disease	8	25.8	22	71
Fever	7	22.6	23	74.2
Stomach ache	27	87.1	3	9.7
Headache	20	64.5	10	32.3
Accident/injury	1	3.2	29	93.5

Source: field survey, 2023

Data in above table shows that the street children were experienced a wide range of diseases. With respect to the most recurrent health problems on street children, study result showed that the majority of respondents (87.1%) were suffered from stomach ache and complications followed by headache which is the second most recurrent health problem for 64.5 % of the respondents. And diarrhoea, chest disease, fever, skin disease and accidents were recurrent health problem among 51.6 %, 25.8%, 22.6%, 16.1% and 3.2 % of respondents respectively.



Figure 7: street children suffering from stomach ache

Consistent with this finding, the research result conducted by Zena and Komba (2010) showed street children suffered from a wide range of illness including stomach aches, headaches, coughs and malaria. This finding is corroborated by qualitative data from the interview. As one interviewee revealed:

I have suffered from different diseases in different time. I do have stomach ache and it may stay for long days. Unless I use some drug or medicine, I could never recover from it. I also suffer from continuous headache due to unknown reason. Cough and injury are also additional problems or sickness that I have been suffering from so far.

But contrary to this one of the participants stated that:

I have never experienced any illness apart from cough and cold, thanks to God. These are not serious illness and it ceased away soon.

The study also employed chi-square test in case there is some association between health condition of street children and their sleeping condition. The chi –square result indicated that there is significant relationship between health status of street children and house condition. The Chi-square test found that there is a significant association between experiencing different diseases among street children and their sleeping condition with ($\chi^2 (1) = 3.97, p = 0.046$) at ($\alpha = 0.05$). From this result, it can be concluded that the street children's experiencing different

diseases has significant association with the housing condition or sleeping on the street in the study area.

Table 15: Whether respondents fall sick by housing condition

	Fall sick				Total	%
	yes	%	no	%		
Housing condition in the street	27	93.1	1	50	28	90.3
at home	2	6.9	1	50	3	9.7
Total	29	100	2	100	31	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Table 15 indicates whether respondents fall sick by housing condition. Accordingly, about 93.1 % of respondents living and sleeping on the street were sick compared to 6.9 % respondents sleeping in the house. This finding is concurs with the study conducted by Azmeraw (2015) in Nekemte which revealed that street children who were sleeping on the street were 21.9% more likely to have fallen sick than those who were sleeping in the house. This indicates respondents who were sleeping on the street were more vulnerable than respondents who sleep at home. However, the study result is in contradiction with study conducted by Sorsa et al. (1999) since they argued that there was no significant difference among those who were homeless and living/sleeping at home and being sick.

Out of 31 street children who were sick the majority 58.1 % of the respondents have not accessed health service compared to about 35.5 % of the respondents who have accessed health service. Of the total respondents who have accessed health services, 25.8% of street children have accessed health service at government health post while the remaining 12.9 % have accessed health service at private clinic.

One of the interviewee revealed that:

I went to government health post to access services when I fall sick and it is my fellow street children who covered the medical expense for me. It is common among us to help each other during hardship. Sometimes church men come to us and support us in covering for us medical expenses. For example, in previous

time one of our friend felt sick and it is the church people who took to health post help get health services. They covered all medical expenses and gave some cash to buy food with it.

However, another participant said that:

When I got sick I did not go to health centre and it is church's men who prayed for me and I totally set free from my sickness.

Based on the above findings, some of the street children seek treatments when they get sick and mostly went to government health centre. It is their fellow street children who support each other during illness whereas still there are some children who do not want to go to health centre other than church.

Table 16: health facility accessed by respondents				
		which of these health facilities have you accessed?		Total
		government health post	Private clinic	
have you accessed any health facility when you are sick?	Yes	7	4	11
	No	1	0	1
Total		8	4	12

Source: field survey, 2025

According to the finding from the current study among street children who have accessed health services, the highest percentage 12.9 % of the respondents paid their medical expenses by themselves while 9.7 % of respondents have used free medical service by government and about 9.7 % of the respondents their expense were covered by sympathetic individuals. Whereas 3.2% and 6.5% of respondents medical expense covered by friends and parents respectively.

With regard to health service fee an expert from women and children affairs office who has been working on children department revealed as:

Most of the time, when street children fallen ill, they come to our office as if we can give them some money to cover their medical expense. But there is no strategy proposed and cascaded by government to cover the medical expense of street children when they fall

sick. We usually collect money from staff members and give them in order to help them get access to health services. But, if we fallen shortage of money, we simply send them off without any support and tell them to go to generous person to cover their medical expense.

From the above point, it is clear that the government has no clear policy and strategies to address the problem related with street children. It is generous individuals who have been supporting those street children of the study during the hardships especially helping them by covering their medical fee.

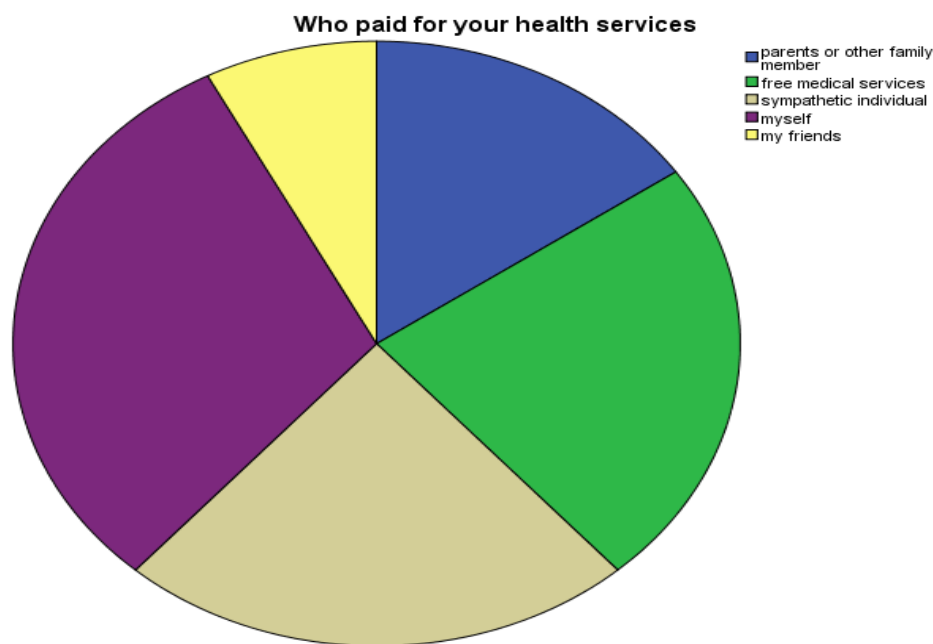


Figure 5: Expense of health services of street children, field survey, 2023

4.6.Coping strategies of street children

Table 17: activities accomplished by street children as coping strategies of economic challenges

Coping strategies	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	percent
Move in group	12	38.7	19	61.3
Look for food	31	100		

Mug people	6	19.4	25	80.6
Manual work	31	100		
Stealing	7	22.6	24	77.4

Source: Field survey 2025

In order to understand the coping mechanisms of street children to street life, the study first wanted to analyse activities performed by the children on the street. The analysed activities included moving in groups for protection, looking for food, mugging people, manual work and stealing. Hence, the study finding revealed that 12(38.7%) of the respondents move in group for protection and cooperation 31(100%) of the respondents looking for food as coping strategies. Almost all of the respondent in the study engage manual work in order to earn living. But, few of the respondents involves in activities like stealing and mugging people as coping strategies with the percentage of 22.6% and 19.4% respectively. However, this finding is in contrast with the research finding conducted by Betty (2018) who revealed that the street children were not so open to talk about stealing and mugging. On the other hand, the study established that the respondents agreed that the street children were involved in the following activities; moving in groups for protection, looking for food and doing manual work. Consistent with research conducted by Baron (2001) which showed that as for the dangers of street-life, involvement in illegal activities should be considered as the most significant. The interview result confirm as one of the interviewee stated that:

Most of the time, we engage in manual work such as loading on and off different materials and goods (Shikala) in order to survive. But, when we fell to get some job, we use leftover from hotel as best survival strategies. There are some boys who use stealing as best strategies to cope up with the strategies and our team never do this kind of activity.

From the above findings, it is clear that street children of the study area engage in different manual work in order to survive economic challenges and in case they fail to get job, they mainly use scavenging or leftover from hotels and restaurants. Still there were street children who use stealing as coping strategies of economic challenges that they have been facing.

Table 15: Street children's best survival tactic in street life

		Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	scavenging	27	87.1	87.1	87.1
	stealing	4	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey 2025

Furthermore, the respondents are also asked about their best tactic to cope up with challenges on the street faced by the street children and the study established that majority of the respondents 27(87.1%) observed that street children survived through scavenging while the remaining respondents 4(12.9%) survived through stealing. This finding therefore indicated that street children use various tactics to survive on the street with scavenging in the highest priority followed by stealing. The study by Mtonga (2011) observes that a common coping strategy that street children employ is scavenging, street children may survive by scavenging for food in waste bins and rubbish dumps. The study conducted by Betty (2018) shows that in addition to scavenging and stealing, street children use dodging authority as coping mechanism to challenges of living on the street.

During field observation the researcher also established that street children scavenging for food in waste bins and rubbish. It is common to see street children, especially young boys scavenging through the garbage in the hope of finding something to eat mostly leftover food or spoiled food thrown away by restaurant owners.

Generally, the study result showed that since life on the street is very tough, street children of the study area have been using different drugs as coping strategies to the challenges they have been facing. The survey showed there were differences in likelihood of abusing substances by sex. Finding from the survey also revealed that the dominant majority 73.3 % male respondents abuse substances, and about 26.7 % of female respondents abuse substances. The study was congruent with study made in Rwanda by NCC (2012), they argued that more males were abusing substances compared to females.

Table 22: type of substance you use

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	chat and cigarette	4	12.9	50.0	50.0
	alcohol and cigarette	1	3.2	12.5	62.5
	chat and shisha	3	9.7	37.5	100.0
	Total	8	25.8	100.0	
Missing	System	23	74.2		
Total		31	100.0		

Source: survey field 2025

Respondents were asked about types of substance they are using to resist the challenges. The study result demonstrated the type of substances used by respondents and found out 12.9 % of the respondents chew chat and cigarette and about 9.7 % of the respondents use chat and shisha, 3.2 % of them smoke cigarette and drink alcohol. The study has also assessed the types of substances respondents used by age. Thus, respondents belonging to 125nd 18 years of age were 12.9 % more likely to have abused chat and cigarette and 9.7 % more likely to have abused chat and shisha than respondents aged 10 and 14. Qualitative finding revealed that the most commonly abused substances among street children were substances like chat, cigarette, shisha and different alcohol drink. However, with respect to drug as it is expensive and secretly exchanged and used, it was not popular among most street children. Consistent with study conducted by Galata and Sofiya (2019) street children used diverse substance pretending to overcome different problems. But inconsistent in that their finding revealed that all respondents are addicted to different substances while the current finding shows there are only 25.8 % of the respondents who are using substance to cope up with the challenges they are facing.

The researcher sought to establish if the street children have plans of reintegration with their families or care takers. The responses are recorded in table 23 below. Majority of the respondents 16(51.6%) observed that the street children did not wish to go back home compared to 15(48.4%) who wished to go back home. The study shows due to different reasons the street children of the study area do not want to go back home. Some of the reason they listed included; lack of freedom at home, others said that they did not want to overburden their caregivers who were already struggling; few of them stated the current situation in different part of the country since war itself contributed from street life. The researcher observed that majority of street children had cut links completely with their family and caretakers. Depending on the

circumstances that pushed them to the streets, the street children remember and do not wish to go back to the same life.

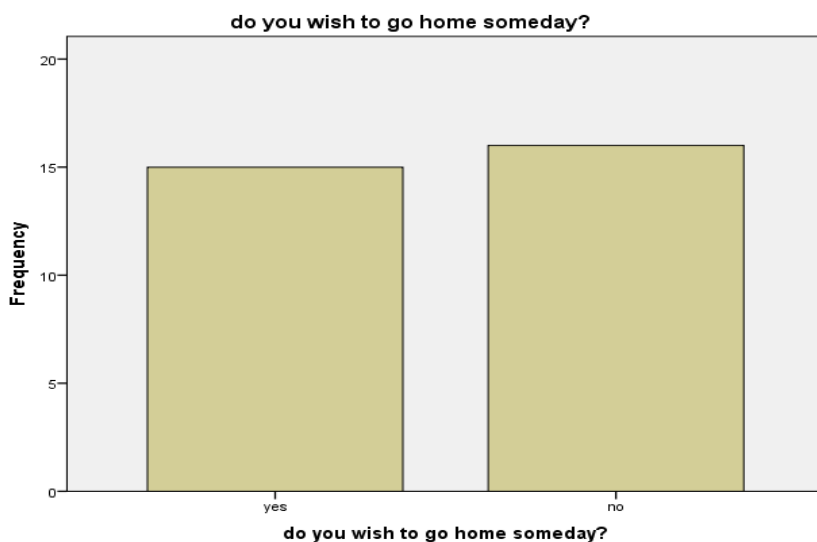
Table: 23 Do you wish to go home someday?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	15	48.4	48.4	48.4
no	16	51.6	51.6	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey 2025

The researcher noted that the findings above agree with Betty (2018) who stated that the majority of the street children did not wish to go back home and some of the reason they listed were lack of freedom at home, others said that they did not want to overburden their caregivers who were already struggling. The researcher observed that majority of street children had cut links completely with their caretakers. Depending on the circumstances that pushed them to the streets, the street children remember and do not wish to go back to the same life.

Figure 11: whether street children wish to go home someday



Source: field survey 2025

One of the interviewee stated that:

I wish I could go back to my family, but it is impossible due to the fact that the area where came from is totally controlled by the military groups and the situation there is so bad. It is in war zone and my family themselves are in danger,

even they are looking for ways to leave the area as the conflict is becoming very devastating in the area.

From the above findings, it is clear that even if the street children are interested to go back home, there are different factors that hinder them to go to their family. Displacement due to war and conflict between different armed groups contributed for becoming street children. On the other hand, there were street children who were not interested to go back home because of harsh treatment from their families.

Chapter Five

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

This study has conducted with the objective of assessing challenges faced by street children and coping strategies of street children in Burayu city. This section provides the conclusion and recommendation of the study which has drawn from analysis of the data that have been gathered from the survey and participants through questionnaire, in-depth interview and observation finding with regard to the study area.

The number of street children in Burayu city is increasing at an alarming rate. However, the exact figure is yet to be known. Almost all of the respondents of the study area stated that they have no adequate access to basic needs like food, shelter and health services. The respondents mentioned that what makes street life the worst is persistent hunger and cold. The problem of getting predictable source of food continues to be the problem of street children. Hence, the very challenges faced by street children of the study area are lack of adequate food, shelter and clothes.

The problem of housing and safer sleeping place remains challenge for the majority of street children, particularly younger and female street children. Most of them sleep in places like veranda and building under construction. The majority of street children have suffered from health problems. Specifically, street children of the study area face multiplicity of health problems such as stomach-ache, Diarrhoea, headache, chest disease, fever and skin disease. In addition street children who are sleeping on the street were more vulnerable to health problem than those who sleep at home.

Street children use several strategies to survive the difficult conditions of the streets. Based on the findings, it is clear that girls and boys on the streets use different means of acquiring money, food and other necessities. As a coping strategy for economic challenges, street children of the study area used different means. Among these activities that they used as coping strategies to economic challenges are working manual jobs, begging, scavenging and stealing. This finding indicated that street children use various tactics to survive on the street with scavenging in the highest priority followed by stealing.

This finding also revealed that street children were experienced a wide range of disease. The vast majority of street children were suffered from stomach ache followed by headache. In order to withstand the health related challenges, the street children of the study are use different coping strategies. Among these strategies, going to government health post, religious place like church and others struggled with their illness. The study also employed chi-square test in case there is some association between health condition of street children and their sleeping condition. The chi –square result indicated that there is significant relationship between health status of street children and house condition.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the research finding the researcher has forwarded the following recommendation.

- ▲ There is a need to conduct academic research in order to understand the prevalence, magnitude or the severity of the problem appropriately and help government come up with the sound policy and guideline to address street life
- ▲ As the number of street children is increasing from time to time across the country, government should propose strategies and projects that could practically resolve the problem related with street children

- ▲ Children on the street are living in difficult circumstances; they cannot meet basic needs: food to survive, clothes to meet seasonal needs, treatment to save themselves from diseases, space to live. In this regard government officials of the study area, non-governmental organizations and community members had the responsibilities to do the job of their part and save the lives of these future stars. Thus, improving the implementation of urban safety net has a great role in settling the problem.
- ▲ To eradicate the problem of street children, structural change has to be made and there has to be equal resource allocation among all section of the population. Empowering the marginalized people with proper resource and power is the only way to combat the street children phenomenon.

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