THE PLIGHT OF ORPHANS AND OTHER VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN THE AREA OF WELFARE AND PROTECTION: A CASE OF KAVERO VILLAGE, MHONDORO, ZIMBABWE.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis analyzes challenges orphans and other vulnerable children face in accessing welfare and protection. The main focus of the thesis is on the challenges these children face, the mechanisms in place for assisting these children as well as the relationship between state and non-state actors and the traditional means of intervention. The findings show how orphans and other vulnerable children struggle to make a living and how the mechanisms of welfare and protection have failed or succeeded in alleviating challenges these children face. Findings from the study, show also how power and knowledge manipulation at the interface of ‘modern’ and traditional ideas can impact on children especially orphans and other vulnerable children in accessing welfare and protection. Above all the thesis through the use of qualitative methodologies mainly the use of key informants purposively sampled, unstructured interviews among other techniques has demonstrated that not all social actors have the same perceptions or interest, but that people in their social situations act and react according to their past experiences and value judgments. The study concluded that orphans and other vulnerable children face a lot of challenges and existing mechanisms of welfare and protection have done little to address them. The study points out that the challenges can be alleviated if enough resources are availed to strengthen the structures and institutions meant to provide welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children.
DEDICATIONS

To my fiancé C.P and my future family you gave me the inspiration to pursue this study, believing in my achievements to be your achievements as well. May Jehovah Jahire bless you.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRWC..............................................African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the children
AIDS..................................................Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEAM................................................Basic Education Assistance Module
CPC....................................................Child Protection Committees
D.A.....................................................District Administrator
DSS....................................................Department of Social Services
GRF8................................................Global Fund Round 8
HIV.....................................................Human Immuno Virus
IEC.....................................................Information, Education and Communication
JCT.....................................................Justice for Children Trust
NAP for OVC.................................National Action Plan for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children
NGOs................................................Non Governmental Organizations
OVC.....................................................Orphans and other Vulnerable Children.
PoS.....................................................Programme of Support
UNCRC.............................................United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF.............................................United Nations Children’s Fund
THE PLIGHT OF ORPHANS AND OTHER VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN THE AREA OF WELFARE AND PROTECTION: A CASE STUDY OF KAVERO VILLAGE MHONDORO

INTRODUCTION

This research is on the challenges orphans and other vulnerable children face in accessing welfare services and protection. It is characterized by challenges brought by economic and political turmoil, problems of poverty, deprivation and limited opportunities which among other factors contributed to adverse conditions which impacted negatively on the livelihoods of rural people especially orphans and other vulnerable children in Zimbabwe. The research is titled: “The Plight of Orphans and other Vulnerable Children in the area of Welfare and Protection: A case study of Kavero village Mhondoro”.

The aim of this study is to give an analysis of problems orphans and other vulnerable children face and evaluate the existing mechanism of welfare and protection for orphans and other vulnerable children. The study also analyzes the relationship between state, non-state actors (external forms of reality) and the traditional actors (internal forms of reality) in trying to mitigate issues of vulnerability by provision of welfare services and protection to these orphans and other vulnerable children.

The study employed qualitative methodologies and made use of unstructured and individual in-depth interviews with key informants. Purposive sampling method was used on the selection of respondents that include OVCs, Chief, Councilor, department of social services personnel, Tsungirirai and personnel from government ran institution Kadoma Training Institute. The study employed interface analysis by Norman Long (1992) in analyzing findings. This conceptual framework is useful since it explores cultural diversity, social differences and conflict inherent in processes of intervention by different actors.

The research notes that the challenges faced by orphans and other vulnerable children are many, varied and complex. Some problems are specific; whilst others apply generally to all children. Most of these problems are shaped and informed by age, gender, class, little or no formal education, being parentless, homeless, abject poverty, family friction and dysfunction among other factors. Some are historical for instance; the legacies of inequality land apportionment and
the marginalization of communities in remote areas, while others are contemporary such as the impact of HIV and AIDS and extreme levels of poverty compounded by an unpalatable political and economic climate. Some causes are rooted in dysfunctional relationships, negative attitudes and redundant and obsolete practices. UNICEF, (1997).

Nevertheless, despite all these challenges, historically efforts have been made to promote sound welfarism. The efforts according to Midgley, (1997), have resulted in the emergence of distinct welfare institutions, which are defined as organized, culturally established ways of enhancing human well-being. For Midgley, (1997) welfare institutions are culturally accepted and form integral element of social life. The oldest and most pervasive he defines as non-formal welfare institutions. These according to Midgley, (1997) consist of the numerous day-to-day efforts of individuals, families and communities that enhance social well-being, as well as culturally obligatory activities designed to help those in need. Most of human history, individuals, and families have sought to increase their well-being through their own effort.

The study shows that Kavero village is faced with various challenges such as dilapidated community initiatives and national programmes in provision of welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children. Noted are the “Zunde raMambo” concept and government and other partners’ programmes such as the NAP for OVC programmes that are inadequately resourced to the extent that they have no sustainability and continued existence. Resource scarcity in the strengthening of protection structures such as CPCs (Child Protection Committees) has seen the continued abuse and lack of knowledge on handling all forms of abuse cases and ill fare on orphans and other vulnerable children. The study shows also that the discord which sometimes is witnessed at the confluence of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ forms of intervention exacerbates the plight of orphans and other vulnerable children in attaining welfare and protection.

The study however noted avenues which can be exploited to remedy challenges faced by orphans and other vulnerable children. Highlighted in the study is the existence of structures and mechanism that provide welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children. The seemingly cordial working relationships between the concerned partners in welfare and protection provision if properly exploited could result in strengthened and sustainable
approaches to interventions in addressing the plight of orphans and other vulnerable children in welfare and protection.

The study concludes to the idea that since the problems faced by orphans and other vulnerable children are varied and complex they require a multi-sectoral approach, where every concerned actor has to pool efforts and assist mitigating these challenges. The study points out that structures and mechanisms of welfare and protection that are in existence should be resuscitated with additional options crafted that takes on board current issues which traditionally were not recognized such as effects of HIV and AIDS. Since resources are the major setback to the implementation of all activities directed to alleviate challenges faced by orphans and other vulnerable children the government and other stakeholders should avail many resources and prioritize them to institutions and mechanisms of welfare and protection to mitigate these challenges.

The data collected is presented in thematic form where the response from the key informants is outlined by objectives of the study. It is the objectives of the study that shaped the themes as well as analysis of the findings.

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The term orphan means a child whose parents or a parent has died. A child is any person below the age of eighteen years. This study classified them into double orphans (for those who lost both parents), or single orphans (those who lost a single parent), and the study further made a category of paternal orphan and maternal orphan showing whether the deceased parent is the mother or father. A vulnerable child is one whose living conditions are not conducive to his or her development and suffers deprivation. This can be because guardians are not employed or not gainfully employed, a child in conflict-ridden family, whose parents are mentally or physically incapacitated and challenged among other reasons.

The word plight for the purpose of this study alludes to problems and challenges that orphans and other vulnerable children face in accessing welfare services in the form of nutrition, shelter, medication, education and other social amenities and protection from all forms of abuse such as rape, child labor, physical, psychological or emotional abuse among others.
Midgley (1997), postulates that it is very elusive to define the concept welfare in precise terms since it can be examined in both qualitative and quantitative terms. For the purpose of this study, “welfare services” is used to point to those services provided with the aim of meeting human needs and maximize social opportunities. Social protection mechanism that acts as safety nets that helps against sliding into poverty and destitution and other forms of ill fare.

The term child or children is premised on legal definition or classification and is informed by both local and international statutes. According to Justice for Children Trust Child Law Manual (2007, p8) the Roman Dutch Law recognizes three categories of children. It refers to “infants” who are persons under the age of seven years and these cannot perform any legally recognized act. A child, above the age of seven years, but below the age of fourteen years is an “impuber.” In addition, can be generally referred to as a “minor” if she or he is under eighteen. The Zimbabwean law and both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child set the benchmark at eighteen. This study, considered those who cannot perform legally recognized acts and who cannot navigate and negotiate bureaucracies to challenge for attention especially on the account of age that is below eighteen years to mean children.

**BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

It is imperative to consider the state of welfare in history as a basis for this study. Kaseke et al (1998), point out that social welfare in Zimbabwe is a shared responsibility between the state through the Department of Social Services, NGOs, community and other stakeholders such as the business community with the Department of Social Services having overall control of social services provisions.

Historically, Lassiter (1983) acknowledges that child protection and welfare provision in traditional African society was well guarded and enshrined in the informal arrangements that existed. Various safety nets were in place to cater for the vulnerable members of the community irrespective of age, gender and class. These safety nets existed at community level, (headed by the chief) and at village level (headed by the village head) cascading down to the extended family level. According to Mushunje (2006), the first port of call in traditional support with
regards to vulnerability were members of the extended family, who if they could not meet the needs adequately, called upon the village, which constituted a group of households made up of different families. The chief with his or her subjects would be drawn in if the vulnerability concerned overwhelmed the village capacity to contain it.

Mphahlele, (cited in Mbizi, L, 1995), writing on the role of kinship ties in the traditional family system, noted that kinship was crucial in the fabric of social relationship and organization. This system made it possible for groups to be self-sufficient and take care of another's welfare. One needed not to starve or stay neglected if infirm or disabled. Orphanages were unknown institutions in traditional life. The extended family took care of elderly and orphans. Mushunje, (2006) noted that, “various protection mechanisms that existed at the extended family levels were often utilized by the able bodied and economically capable to care for the elderly who were no longer able to economically sustain themselves, as well as the young for the same reason.” In addition, she notes that, within lineage and extended family, there was an obligation for the relatively wealthy to care for the needs of their kith and kin that were relatively poor.

It was not only the poor depending on the wealthy but also gave services to the wealthy which they came to depend on, for instance children of the poor working the fields of the wealthy as well as herding their cattle, goats and other domesticated animals. Hence making a society that socially networked and depended on every member of the community. As Aristotle quoted in Wolf, (1977:356), postulated that “…He who by nature and not by mere coincidence is without state, is either above humanity or below it, he is the ‘tribe less’, but he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god.” Here Aristotle gives us a premise or an insight that every member of a given state/society should enjoy being part of the community through participation, rendering and receiving provisions.

For those welfare provisions prominent in history that catered for orphans and other vulnerable children includes… borrowing and lending, where the borrower has an obligation to return, although this could be ignored by the lender in a case where the borrower is extremely poor. The concept of borrowing and lending within the traditional society did not imply immediate repayment as is common today, and whatever was owed did not accumulate interest or have value added to it, despite the time lapse, (Dube, 1999). Another form of support involved cattle
loaning for use as draught power and for milk to children, (mombe dzekurunzira/Inkomo zamasiso). Sometimes children could be paid cattle for a period that they would have worked. To enable them start their own herd to build capital and hence build protection for their families. At the chiefdom level, there existed a number of social support and social safety mechanism. An example of such mechanism is the “chief’s granary” (Zunde raMambo/Isiphala seNkosi). This guarded against drought or famine, and to mitigate the impact of such mishaps on the vulnerable members of the community especially orphaned children, elderly and the infirm.

Mushunje, (2006) acknowledges that largely, most of these safety nets still exist though to a varying degree due to a plethora of factors such as influences of modernization, urbanization and industrialization, and the economic crisis that has gripped Zimbabwe over the last years. However, challenges brought by, inter alia, HIV and AIDS, have resulted into instances where today’s child belongs to no one in particular, (Lachman et al 2002). Community and extended family networks’ coping mechanism has been weakened and as such inhibiting the capacity of family or communities to care for children. This also translate to litigation process where in the traditional societies there were no documented legislation to deal with violation of child rights but relied on informal arrangements like family board meeting and chief’s council, (Dare) disputes resolution mechanism depending with magnitude of the case.

Presently child protection and welfare in Zimbabwe has been codified into Child Rights in legally binding instruments. In order to understand child welfare and protection in Zimbabwe it is necessary also to consider the provision of the International and Regional legal instruments to which Zimbabwe is part of. Mushunje, (2006) remark that Zimbabwe declared its political commitment to the protection of children by being party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which were ratified in December 1999 and September 2000.

Away from the International and Regional Conventions child welfare and protection in Zimbabwe is carried out by national policies like that adopted by cabinet; the National Orphan Care Policy 1999, which created conducive environment for collaboration by multi-sectoral organizations, that helped to its design. The National Action Plan for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC) formerly National Plan of Action for Orphans and

Zimbabwe unlike some countries, for instance in continental Europe that do not have wholly codified piece of legislation on Child Law, Zimbabwe has developed it and the law comes from a number of sources that help protect and ensure their welfare in the form of Customary Law, Common Law, Statute Law, Constitutional Law and Precedents. According to Justice for Children Trust Child Law Manual;” customary law refers to the traditional law of the indigenous people of Zimbabwe. This differs from one tribe to another, but due to enactment of statutes on children by the legislature this has become less important as a source of law as applied in the court of law.”

Common Law stems from the colonial period. Justice for Children Trust Child Law Manual, (2007) point out that when Zimbabwe was colonized in 1890, the colonial administration applied the law applicable then in South Africa’s Cape Province. This was the Roman Dutch Law. It is the law referred to by the current constitution as the law applicable at the Cape of Good Hope on June 10, 1891. This law is uncodified but found in writings of Roman-Dutch jurists as well as textbooks and previously decided cases. This is very important source of Child Law and Zimbabwe Law in general.

Statute law refers to all Acts enacted and passed by parliament which have the the force of law. It is written in a document called an Act of Parliament for instance the Children’s Act, (Chapter 5:06) formerly the Children Protection and Adoption Act. This is the most important source of child law in a modern society where Parliament addresses new issues as well as repealing outdated customary and common law. The Constitution also as the Supreme law of the country and any law and enactment, which contradict it, is deemed invalid to the extent of its inconsistency with the constitution; it therefore becomes the standard law. (Justice for Children Trust Child Law Manual, 2007).

The Zimbabwean government also uses Precedent, which is ruling, by using previous judicial decisions. Further the Department of Social Services in the Ministry of Labor and Social Services employs professional Social Workers who, in addition to being engaged in accordance
with the Public Service Act(Chapter 16:04) like all public servants, are appointed as Probation Officer in terms of Section 46(1) of the children’s Act(Chapter 5:06). All Social Services Officers are in the main, Child Welfare officers appointed to deal with children’s issues including legal protection, Dhlembeu (2000).

Concerning welfare, the government provides through the Department of Social Services social security programs which cover areas like health, education, birth registration, Public Assistance/Maintenance Allowance, nutritional support, Psychosocial support, among others. The government achieves all these with the help of implementing partners, local; regional and international NGOs, Private Voluntary Organization, and community based organization among others. The government has set-up certified Training Institutes and Probation hostels as well as registered private institutions to help protect and ensure better welfare of children in need of care, abused or in conflict with the law as reformatory dormitories.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The welfare and protection of children especially orphans and other vulnerable children is very problematic in Zimbabwe. It is not only a policy dilemma but also represent the escalating crisis in the development process in Zimbabwe. In a context of economic austerity and political instability, high prevalence of HIV and AIDS and a continuous weakening of community and family networks, orphans and other vulnerable children are becoming more exposed to new forms of vulnerabilities. However for various reasons, the plight of orphans and other vulnerable children especially in remote areas is not well understood if not misconstrued. At the same time there seem to be some blind assumptions that adequate protection and welfare mechanism for children and that duality of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ welfare institutions is peaceful.

**JUSTIFICATION**

The problem of orphans and other vulnerable children goes beyond academic discourse and policy manipulations. It is a problem worth researching not only because of gaps in the literature heavily concentrated on urban children or the marginalization of children in remote communities. It is a problem that represents an emergent crisis because of the growth in numbers of orphans and other vulnerable children and the new forms of vulnerability that are emerging.
These challenges and vulnerabilities are not only complex but also vary in scope and intensity. In my view, it is justifiable to attend to this problem through research. Furthermore, apart from analyzing the challenges, the study would be more explicit by capturing and evaluating the various forms of welfare mechanisms, if they exist. At the same time, an interesting dimension is revealed by the nature of the relationship between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ welfare institutions.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What are the problems Orphans and other Vulnerable Children face in terms of welfare and protection?
- What are the existing mechanisms for the welfare and protection of Orphans and other Vulnerable Children?
- To what extent is the dualism between traditional and modern forms of intervention complementary in enhancing welfare and protection of Orphans and other vulnerable Children?

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- Give an analysis of problems Orphans and other Vulnerable Children face in terms of welfare and protection.
- Evaluate the existing mechanisms for the welfare and protection of Orphans and other Vulnerable Children.
- Examine the resultant impacts of the interface of traditional and modern forms of intervention in welfare and protection on Orphans and other Vulnerable Children.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is scarce literature on rural Orphans and other Vulnerable Children. The available literature has been quite useful in this study. The Department of Social Services carried out a study in 1994 in two districts of Masvingo Province, Masvingo and Mwenezi, districts. The study highlighted interesting findings that was later to be confirmed by Mushunje, (2006) that the extended family was well alive to the plight of its children but it was failing to cope as it was surviving under the yoke of poverty, Dhlembeu, (2000). The report emphasized
strengthening of chiefs and village heads to spearhead the monitoring of children’s circumstances and effectively deal with problems faced by children and that chiefs be given substantial amount of judicial powers in matters concerning marriages, and deceased estates that have direct impact on children. Recommendations were also that, extended families look after their children and if they fail community should come in and children should be removed out of community in extreme cases where guardians cannot be sourced from the communities. The chiefs were also mandated to set aside a field known as ‘Zunde raMambo/Isiphala seNkosi’ to benefit Orphans and other Vulnerable Children in need of care.

In 1998, the Department of Social Services carried out studies in two districts, Chikomba and Beitbridge in Mashonaland East and Matabeleland South respectively on Action oriented surveys on sexual abuse: Community Perspectives. The survey produced results, which were shared in the 2000 national workshop held in Beitbridge in Zezani community, which developed the slogan as an awareness campaign, *Child, Child, and Child First*. UNICEF UNAIDS and WHO, (2002), acknowledged that it was not possible for them to eliminate every obstacle, as an additional intervention by the government was necessary. Dhlembeu and Mayanga, (2006), identified gaps in the legislation which included lack of linkages between laws and emerging issues of HIV and AIDS, assuming roles as breadwinners and care givers. They point out that laws were drawn up before the advent of HIV and AIDS scourge.

Powell, (2006) in his article *Children in institutional Care; Lessons from Zimbabwe’s experience*, noted that institutionalization of children in need of care is widely recognized as inappropriate and potentially damaging. He claims that studies have confirmed a higher prevalence of psychological disturbance in institutionalized children than those raised in community settings. The emphasis has been put again in strengthening community capacities to care for its own children that the children will not be removed from their environments for institutionalization.
METHODOLOGY

Description of the study area

The study was carried out in the Kavero village, which is in ward 8 of Mhondoro in Chegutu district. The area traditionally is under Chivero chieftainship and survives on subsistence farming, small scale vegetable gardening and small scale livestock production. The area is serviced by Norton and Chegutu and lies at an approximated equi-distance of 165 km from both towns.

The research is situated within the qualitative research methodology. The qualitative research methodology was preferred because it can account for attitudes, feelings and values of research participants among other non-quantifiable aspects of human social life and interaction, Burgess, (1984). Secondary data was also used as a source of information on welfare and protection, produced by the agencies operating in the area.

Sampling design

Purposive sampling was employed to get the respondents. This was based on the use of village registers. In purposive sampling one has purpose in mind and a predetermined group hence not going for the broader statistical universe. Purposive sampling is mainly judgmental. Durrheim and Painter, (2006, 132) are of the view that the strength of purposive sampling is within the fact that cases selected are typical of population targeted. The research made use of orphaned children, or other vulnerable children as key informants. The study also uses expert sampling to get expert views. These comprise the custodians of the Chivero community like the chief, councilor, government officials in the Department of Social Services and NGOs implementing National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC) programs in the area.
Methods

Interviews

Individual In-depth interviews were made use of with key informants. These are deemed suitable for the extraction of qualitative data because they allow conversation between the researcher and the respondents to occur. Conversation has been agreed upon as instrumental in extracting data or statement that best capture the actor’s point of view, (Burgess, 1984, Webb and Webb, 1932 and Bechofer 1974). The informal individual conversation are crucial also because certain people tend to be more at easy in an informal setting, hence valuable data may be obtained by this method. Mwanje, (2001) also postulates that individual in-depth interviews also allow the extraction of complex and highly sensitive subject matter.

Unstructured interviews are very useful in research because ‘they provide the opportunity for the research to probe further, to problems and secure vivid, accurate, inclusive narration from the participants that are based on personal experience.’ Burgess, (1983).

“Negotiating access in the field”

As one of the implementers in the area, entry was not a problem. The researcher is well known by authorities and gatekeepers as well as fellow implementers that access to the field and information was easy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

INTERFACE ANALYSIS

The research is premised on interface analysis by Long, (1992). It explores cultural diversity, social differences and conflict inherent in process of intervention and mitigation especially about vulnerabilities stemming from welfare and protection. According to Long, (1992)interface mostly occur at points where different, and often conflicting life worlds or social fields intersect or in social situation in which interactions become oriented around problems of bridging, accommodating, segregating, or contesting social, evaluative and cognitive viewpoints. The above stated situations are explored in the context of political and cultural polarization, corruption, and unregulated dualism of traditional and modern forms of
intervention with viewpoints in some way in sharp contrast in dealing with welfare and protection of orphans and other vulnerable children.

Long and Villarreal, (1993) and Acre and Long, (1987 and 1992), pointed that interface analysis aims at elucidating types and sources of social discontinuity and linkages present in such situations and to identify the organizational and cultural means of reproducing or transforming them. Interface analysis mainly help to understand the manner in which different actors, state, non state and communities conceives vulnerability, the process of creating meanings and the reactions that are informed by meanings attached. Meanings are enshrined in language structures, for instance, Villarreal, (1993) posit that a common language used by a group reinforces one’s worldview. Language gives human beings means by which to navigate and negotiate meanings through symbols. For, Long, (1992) interface analysis focuses on the linkages and networks that develop between individual or parties strategies. He further pointed out that continued interactions encourages the development of boundaries and shared expectations that shape the interaction of participants so that overtime the interface itself becomes an organized entity of interlocking relationships. All these helped to comprehend the established meanings around vulnerability on orphans and other vulnerable children on welfare and protection as being influenced by the narratives that each individual and community employ to comprehend social situations and reality.

On the other hand Villarreal, (1993) pointed out that although interface analysis presupposes some degree of common interest; there is also a propensity to generate conflict due to contradictory interests and objectives or to unequal power relations. Following that, individuals who represent particular constituencies, groups or organizations sometimes carry out negotiations at the interface. This assisted in comprehending the gap between local people’s comprehension of vulnerability and the state and non-state actors.

**Ethical consideration**

There are ethical issues to be considered in every study and this study was not an exception. All participants were notified of the purpose and aim of the study and which is that of fulfilling requirements of Master of Science Degree at the University of Zimbabwe. Informed consent was sort from respondents before taking part and had the prerogative to withdraw at
any stage they feel they want to. The information shall be kept in strict confidentiality. No respondent shall be exposed to dangers of victimization, harm or legal litigation due to information availed during interview. Anonymity of participants’ identity has been ensured through the use of pseudonyms. Authority was sort from community gatekeepers that is the chief and other heads of villages and families to carry out the study as well as to interview children.

Weaknesses/ Limitations of the study

In order to enhance the validity of the findings different respondents were asked similar questions on same issues. Informants could be revisited to verify some findings. Working against the validity of the findings is the power dynamics involved between some of the informants. The study was carried out in the area where the researcher works for instance the researcher is the head of station in the Department of Social Services in Norton where the respondent Probation Officer works. The OVC Field Coordinator for Tsungirirai reports to the researcher on NAP for OVC activities. The researcher is also known in Mhondoro, Kavero village where he constantly interact with and supervises the operations of child protection committees and other child related activities in NAP for OVC and other Social Services programmes. Such relationships may have brought about power dynamics that can influence some of the findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This data is a compilation of the views and experiences of different key informants, in their different social, professional, economic and political positions in the context of problems faced by orphans and other vulnerable children in accessing welfare and protection in Kavero village. The data has been collected from informants drawn from government ran institutions and departments, from NGOs, Chief, councilor and Orphans and other vulnerable children themselves. The data is presented in a thematic form to avoid repetition of issues since all respondents were asked similar questions on different objectives which shapes the themes.
Problems Orphans and other Vulnerable Children face

There was acknowledgement of the existence of a plethora of challenges that orphans and other vulnerable children face from all respondents. Orphans and other vulnerable children in their evolving capacities pointed out to problems of school related requirements and clothing as challenges that they face. Problems of shelter, adequate nutrition and infrastructure that allow reporting of child abuse cases as well as enabling the connection of the children in difficult circumstances to existing safety nets are some of the challenges orphans face. Also lack of information on education and communication (IEC) material that raises awareness and provides additional knowledge on where to attain such services. Challenges that orphans and other vulnerable children face are multi-faceted, complex and continuously change and require a multi-dimensional approach in order to mitigate them.

All the interviewed orphans and other vulnerable children pointed out to education as their major problem. Pamela Saunyama is a form 2 girl at Gonza secondary and is 15 years. She is a paternal orphan, her father passed on the year she was born in October 1995. She stays with her mother who is not employed and relies on subsistence farming. Her major problem is mainly education, her mother does not afford her fees and she is constantly turned away from school for outstanding fees and none payment.

“Amai vangu vanoedzawo kundibhadharira school fees, but even ndaenda kuchikoro mauniforms nemabhuku zvinondinetsa.”

(My mother tries paying my fees but even when I go to school I will be not having uniforms and books.)

Carlton Masunda is a form 1 pupil at Gonza Secondary and is 15 years. He is a double orphan both parents passed on when he was still young. He stays with his elderly paternal grandparents. Carlton’s problem is mainly with his education as well. In most instances he is out of school trying to source fees. Uniforms and stationery are also a challenge. He also pointed out that even at home clothes are a challenge since his grandparents are old and cannot afford extra expenses in clothing. The same with his extended family they only come in the provision of food as they are also subsistent farmers.
Craig Samaita is a form 3 boy at Gonza secondary he is 16 years old. Both parents passed on and is staying with paternal grandmother who is also widowed. His challenges stems from failure to raise fees and to secure enough stationery and clothing at home.

"Kubva pakashaya baba vangu muna August ndipo pakatanga nhamo yekudzingwa kuchikoro." (When my father died in August that is when problems of being turned away from school started.)

Doreen Chauke is a form 2 girl and she is aged 14 years and she is at Gonza Secondary. Both parents passed on. She stays with her maternal grandmother who is a widow. Her challenges are also in the education area where school fees are a problem. Uniforms and stationery are also a problem coupled with clothing and food unavailability.

"Maschool fees anondinetsa, mauniforms, zvekupfeka uye chekudyya kumba. Tinoboyamurwa namaiguru mukoma wamhamha nezvekudyya pamwe vanondiunzira hembe asi ivo havashandiwo.“ (School fees are a problem, uniforms, clothing and food availability. My late mother’s elder sister helps us with food provisions and sometimes brings me clothes but she is also not employed).

Almost all the interviewed children did not have knowledge on mechanisms, institutions and legal instruments that provide them with welfare services and protection. The major challenge being that there is no information availed to them on such avenues. In other reporting mechanisms which are confidential like Childline toll free 116 facilities are none existent because mostly network of all service providers will be not available.

Mr. Rujeko a superintendent for K.T.I (Kadoma Training Institute) where children in need of care are placed acknowledged that children in general and orphans and other vulnerable children in particular are facing a lot of challenges in accessing welfare and protection. Many children both children in conflict with the law/ child offenders and those in need of care due to destitution and abuse have found their way into institutions although institutions should be options of last resort. By regulation these institutions like K.T.I are supposed to receive and retain children in need of care brought to them by the police and mainly probation officers and K.T.I offers residents to children in conflict with the law from the age of 14 to below 18
years but recent economic hardships have seen authorities mixing these children. Mr. Rujeko pointed out that relatives and extended families have been hard hit and overwhelmed by economic demands that come with caring for these children and hence many children are being institutionalized.

Ms Nhaka of the department of Social Services and the probation Officer for Norton district who is responsible for placing children in need of care both offenders and non offenders pointed to negative aspects of institutionalization which is that of psychological disturbances in institutions where children are kept in little less than ‘artificial’ environment. It is also the propensity to harden children especially those children in conflict with the law and those also mixed with offenders when they are not problem children themselves. Ms. Nhaka also acknowledged the prevalence of challenges Orphans and other vulnerable children in Kavero village face such as protection from all kinds of abuse, medical, nutritional, educational, psychosocial support among others. Mrs. Tarwirei of Tsungirirai an NGO operating in the area also added cultural timidity and lack of education on the part of the community in approaching welfare and protection of orphans and other vulnerable children.

The councilor Mr. Tichafa pointed to the scarcity of resources to prop up community projects to cushion challenges encountered by children. The government and its partners are not availing enough resources to combat such vulnerability at community level. “hurumende haisi kutipa ma inputs nenguva”(the government is not giving us inputs on time.) by the time inputs are availed in their scarcity as well much time will have lapsed and thereby affecting harvests and food shortages remains chronic. The chief Mr. Mwendamberi raised issues of resource scarcity from government and local partners and the kind of intervention by the NGOs as necessitating and continuing the plight of orphans in welfare and protection.

Ms. Nhaka pointed to the lack of knowledge of institutions and existing mechanisms providing welfare services and protection among communities and children themselves.

“The problem is that, most villagers are not aware of services being provided by the Department of Social Services in child welfare and protection.”
Information should be disseminated to communities and children themselves that they approach the department to be assisted. Almost all concerns that these orphans and other vulnerable children are facing can be catered for by the government. Ms Nhaka pointed out that the greatest of all problems is lack of knowledge on where and how to access these services. She pointed also to other problems such as the distance between the supposed beneficiaries and the service provider. The department of social services which serves the Kavero village is situated approximately 65km from the community and with bad transport networks and exorbitant bus fares being charged makes such services out of reach. The department itself is not mobile and cannot reach out to these children.

On protection the department works closely with NGOs and other ministries like judiciary, education, the police through the victim friendly unit and the community in awareness campaigns and formation of Child Protection Committees in every wards and villages. However such committees are not functional and in some cases are not in existence hence child abuse cases will not be reported and in cases not noticed or continued because communities would not be knowing that they will be abusing children in some cases.

Mrs. Tarwirei and Ms Nhaka concurred that children did not have enough protection in the Kavero village. The police post in Kavero village does not have a victim friendly unit which deals with issues of children specifically trained in that area. Ethics that are required in interviewing children be it offenders or victims are violated in some instances with children and other villagers reluctant to report cases of abuse following lack of confidentiality and the way investigations are carried out that as Pamela pointed out that one ends up being treated as the perpetrator.

“Eeh! Kumapurisa kunotyisa kuti iwe ukamhan’ara unopedzesera woita senge ndiwe unemhosva, uchingodaidzwa plus unenge uchifambwa newe pese pese zvokuti vanhu vese vanozozviziva kuti wakarepwa, ndakazviona pana Mainesi musikana wemuraini medu” (not real name.)

(Eeh! at the police station if you report you will end up like the perpetrator and the police will be moving around with you and all people will find out that you have been raped I saw it on Mainesi (pseudonym), the girl in our village)
Mechanisms for the welfare and protection of orphans and other vulnerable children

Welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children is one of the main aims of the Zimbabwean government. The government in conjunction with NGOs, communities, individuals and other stakeholders has put in place safety nets to hedge against vulnerabilities and destitution at family up to national level. These mechanisms of welfare and protection help in providing or linking orphans and other vulnerable children to existing safety nets. The institutions of welfare and protection are compounded by various challenges that include resource constrains that have seen them only existing in name.

All the children who were key informants to this research showed lack of knowledge of mechanism of welfare and protection besides the police and their extended families and other community members who could offer them small manual tasks to be paid in cash or kind (maricho). The department of Social Services through Ms Nhaka revealed that the government administers social protection programmes that aim at cushioning children in difficult circumstances and families in general from sliding into destitution and a state of ill fare. Programmes in place include, Public Assistance through Monthly Allowances of US$20 for all households headed by an elderly person, those living with disability, the chronically ill among other conditions that incapacitate a supposed family breadwinner from being economically productive. The department also gives foster fees to institutions and families fostering children. The amount is US$20 per child as well.

“*We conduct means-testing when we are enlistning these families to benefit; we look for adverse conditions that incapacitate the concerned beneficiary from self-sustenance.*”

Ms Nhaka pointed out that the department co-administers the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) with the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture that offers education to orphans and other vulnerable children.

“This is a programme where disadvantaged children get educational assistance after applying and assessed by the community selection committee set at each school to consider such applications. The assistance is applied for annually”.

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The problem encountered with these facilities as pointed out by Ms Nhaka is that the Public Assistance and BEAM is mainly accessed by urban people since those in Kavero need to travel to Norton where the Social Services department is located and mostly they cannot afford bus fares coupled with lack of knowledge on the existence of such services. Similarly BEAM information is either wrongly communicated or those families with literate members who understand the requirements only benefit. Also Ms Nhaka pointed out that it is those children be it orphans or not who are in school that benefit.

“*The programme focuses on children out of school who have dropped out as first preference but we have problems with school authorities who have reservations on following after those children who would have dropped out*”

The department also according to Ms Nhaka provides health services through the issuance of Assisted Medical Treatment Order (AMTO) which is only admissible at government hospitals. These orders cover both adults and children; they are also issued after a means-testing has been carried out. The problem with Kavero village is that the beneficiaries are required to travel to Norton to get the service and after that they have to travel again to Harare or any nearby government hospital given that Norton do not have a government hospital and is serviced by a Council hospital which do not recognize the order.

“The travelling warrants that we used to issue to these clients now are not being accepted by the transport operators given the influx of omnibuses hence we can practically say the service is none existent to these children and community.”

The department and NGOs also supply farming inputs to vulnerable children during the farming season. According to Mrs. Tarwirei of Tsungirirai they give two bags of fertilizer and 1 bag maize seeds to vulnerable households. Similarly the department of Social Services issue out also a similar package through voucher payments where the beneficiaries redeems their vouchers at a nearest GMB. In the voucher would be two 50kg bags of fertilizer compound D and Ammonium Nitrate with a 10kg maize seed. The problem however as cited by the Councilor for ward 8 Mr. Tichafa and Mr. Mwendamberi the chief for Chivero is that of late disbursement of these inputs which they added that would not be enough for entire community’s vulnerable.
“Tinotenda chose rubatsiro kubva kuhurumende nemaNGOs asi deno vati wedzerei pazvikamu nekuti mhuri dziri kushaya dzakati wandei”.

“We are very grateful to the help that we are getting from the government and NGOs but our plea is that, can they increase their allocation because there are more vulnerable families.”

The orphans and other vulnerable children also get help from their extended families as well as taking manual tasks from well up community members who later pay them in cash or in kind. According to Carlton during the school holidays he herds cattle for their neighbor and in turn provides tillage to his grandparents during the farming season. They sometimes provide him with fees.

“Paholiday ndinofudzira vaMasunda (name supplied) mombe nembudzi ndine vana vavo ivo vachizorimira vana gogo plus Gilbert first born yavo inombondipa hembe dzaanenge asisakwane.”

“During the holiday I herd Mr. Masunda’s (pseudonym) cattle and goats together with his children and they in turn till grandmother’s field, also his elder son Gilbert gives me some of his clothes that would be small to him.”

Most assistance these children get is from their extended families as all of them pointed to their relatives coming in in sourcing of fees, clothing, and food among other help they offer them.

The department besides probation work it does which is focused on child issues placing them on places of safety and committing them into registered and certified institutions it works closely with NGOs, state institutes and private institutions in providing welfare and protection. Through the Programme of Support (PoS) a fund managed by UNICEF distributed to other organizations in form of NGOs and the Department of Social Services through a consortium to carry out NAP for OVC activities which offers Psychosocial support, palliative care, birth registration, among other social services. Mrs. Tarwirei pointed out that they in conjunction with the department of Social Services hold 3 days camp every quarter for children under palliative care. The program considers those children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. Under the UNICEF managed fund the Department of Social
Services and Tsungirirai receives child participation budgets which they use in ensuring mainstreaming of children’s views in community decision making processes.

The community through the chief’s granary (Zunde raMambo/Isiphala seNkosi) used to cater for the disadvantaged children. The chief’s granary was maintained from community’s own initiative and contribution. According to Mr. Mwendamberi who is the custodian of the chief’s granary families take turns to till the field and also give contributions from their harvest towards the chief’s granary to be distributed to vulnerable families in cases of need.

“Zunde raitwa zvine mukumbira kare asi izvozi tiri kuedza kuritanga zvakare nerubatsiro rwatiri kuvimbiswa ne government nemaNGOs.”

(The chief’s granary was prominent in the past but we are trying to revive it as we are being promised help from the government and NGOs.) The greatest late down of the chief’s granary according to Mr. Mwendamberi is the unavailability of resources in time.

“Hurumende naivo vana Tsungirirai ava vanotipa ehe mainputs asi arikunonoka kuuya uye mashoma zvakare tichigere kuwana mainputs anenge akanangana neZunde, tine minda mihombe chaizvo asi zvekushandisa ndopasina.”

(The government and organization like Tsungirirai yes they give us inputs but they come late and in lesser quantities and we are yet to receive inputs specifically for the chief’s granary.)

On the protection side the department and other stakeholders such as other parent ministries like Education, Agriculture, Justice, Home Affairs (Police, Victim Friendly Unit), (National Aids Council)NAC, NGOs, Business community and the Community set up Child Protection Committees headed by the Department of Social Services who have the constitutional mandate to look into the issues of children. These committees should be set up from village level up to National level and should be both adult and child led and in the adult led CPC there is supposed to be a child representative. The problems as confided by Ms Nhaka, Mrs. Tarwirei and Mr. Tichafa are those surrounding the functionality of these CPCs which is the lack of resources to establish and train these committee members. These CPCs are not functioning at their required capacity and hence are more of protection mechanisms in name.
There also exist according to Ms Nhaka legal instruments such as the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of children, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of children (Zimbabwe is signatory to both conventions), and other policies like the National Orphan Care policy. The legislation enacted in Zimbabwe like the Children’s Act (Chapter 5:06) helps a lot in protecting the children. However the Kavero children and community do not have sufficient knowledge to these protection mechanisms.

The communities are also given free services by organizations like the Child line which gives toll free services to report all forms of abuse on children. According to Ms Nhaka, these services exist in name only and are mostly for urban children who have access to cell phones. Although there are cell phones now in rural areas the problem with Kavero village is that network of all service providers are always down for the 116 services. Asked of such services as toll free all children professed ignorance as Craig pointed out, “aah handizivi zvekuzofona asi child line ndakamboinzwa nasisi Thandie (referring to Mrs. Tarwirei though (not her real name).” (Aah I don’t know about calling but I know Child line from sister Thandie.) (Pseudonym).

**Interface of the traditional and modern forms of intervention in welfare and protection of Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (OVCs).**

The provision of welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children is a shared responsibility between different actors such as the government, NGOs, individuals, communities among other stakeholders. Given this multi-sectoral approach there is convergence of ideas which brings about agreements and disagreements in crafting ways and strategies to address the plight of children. Power dynamics informs the kind of activities or intervention strategies that are passed at the confluence of the mainly ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ approaches as well as other individual inputs among others. The study noted that agreements and disagreements exist between different actors in welfare and protection provision in Kavero village. The study noted by and large that it is the acknowledgement of the existence of challenges and the need to alleviate these challenges that orphans and other vulnerable children face that make agreements overwhelm disagreements.
All key informants expressed a good working relationship with each other but areas of contention is evident regarding the kind of intervention in relation to one group of interveners such as the NGOs, Department of Social Services, Government ran institutions being viewed as ‘modern’ (chimanjemanje) as the chief pointed out in one part of his response on issues of child rights and forms of intervention versus the community members and their institutions which are viewed as’ traditional’.

Mr. Mwendamberi pointed out that he did not have problems with working with the government departments and NGOs since he is a government recognized custodian of the village. Mr. Mwendamberi pointed out that there is no way one can chase or ignore NGOs worse government departments because for any chiefdom to be viable help from outside is needed because they are far from being self-sufficient.

“Tinozoita dambudziko hedu ne kind yebatsiro yavanopa chikafu chekupiwa chinokasika chapera. Ndinogara ndakataura mumisangano inova yanotidaidza vehurumende navo vemaNGOs ava kuti toda mainputs kwete chikafu. Ngavasamirire nzara asi kuti ngavadzivirire nzara nekutipa mbeu kuti tizvirimire.”

(We encounter a problem with the kind of help they give us food assistance is short lived. I address such issues in meetings that they the government and these NGOs calls for to give us inputs and not food. They should not wait for drought but should avoid hunger by giving us seeds and inputs.)

The Councilor also took blame on how these NGOs operate. “Unoona mamwe maNGOs anongouya oti nyorai vanhu tinouya musi wakati seNGOs X (name supplied) yakauya hameno gore rapera iro nanhasi hatisati tavaona. (You see some NGOs they come and make us write down names and tells us they are coming on a certain day like NGOs X (name given) made us write names last year till today we haven’t seen them.)

Mr. Mwendamberi and Mr. Tichafa pointed also on the impact on cultural values some of the intervention that NGOs has. On clothes distribution they pointed out that even girl children are given trousers and shorts to wear. This according to Mr. Mwendamberi fuels some of the sexual related issues
Mr. Mwendamberi together with Mr. Tichafa indicated also that NGOs come into the area and teach children rights but with no responsibilities.

“Kungoti muno dambudziko iroro harisati ranyuka ndinotyira kuti marights aya ari kutora simba ravabereki handisi kuti vana ngavrasakosheswe asi ndiri kuti vana ngavadzidziswe kuti uyu muberek kwete kumhan’arira muberek.”

(Its only that in this area we are not confronted with that problem yet but I strongly feel that these rights are taking away parents’ authority, am not saying these children should not be looked after but children should be taught that this is a parent and need not go about reporting a parent.)

“Welfare sekuziva kwandinoita inoita zvekare zvevana vanenge vashungurudzwa pamwe nemaNGOs uye mapurisa asi sekuno kumusha tiriko isu madzimambo kutonga nyaya dzakadaro. Tine miripiso yatinopa kune vanenge vabatwa nemhosva dzevana asi unozongonzwa mwana wekwawhangi atorwa newelfare nemapurisa nyaya yacho kuno haina kusvika ipapo dai pakagadziriswa.”

(Welfare(department of social services) the way I know it deals also with children’s issues together with police and NGOs who would have abused but here we are present to settle such issues of abuse as chiefs. We have fines that we mate on those convicted of child abuse, we just hear the child from this certain family has been taken away by welfare people and police with the case not reaching our courts and that should be corrected.)

Ms Nhaka and Mrs. Tarwirei also pointed out that they do not have problems working with traditional authorities and pointed out that they are very co-operative more than their urban counterparts. They pointed out that they strive by all means to give them the programmes to spearhead in their communities. The problem they encounter however is associated somewhat with tradition. Mrs. Tarwirei pointed out that Kavero village is still protective of their ties even in cases of child abuse. “...these people they still value their kinship ties that to get information on child abuse is a mammoth task.”, “havadi kukanganisa magariro(they don’t want to disturb societal harmony), as they put it across.” “Also they prefer outside
settlement without involving the police and the Department of Social Services fearing not to get compensation the moment police take over.”

The superintendent for Kadoma training institute Mr. Rujeko pointed out that the community do not understand their role in the rehabilitation and protection of children both problem children and those in need of care for reasons not being in conflict with the law. Most children according to Mr. Rujeko are not being visited by their relatives because they regard the institution as a juvenile prison and most importantly tradition demands that one has to look after his or her relative hence most community members prefer to hold on to their children even in the face of abuse or ill fare on the part of the child.

Mrs. Tarwirei and Ms. Nhaka confided that the other problem when it comes to carrying out humanitarian activities in the field in Kavero village and other remote areas is the District Administrator who has a major say on where to operate and the current D.A is too strict and stifles NGO operations. According to Mrs. Tarwirei the D.A is too political and most NGOs especially those based on Rights issues are constantly hauled to his office for questioning. Some NGOs has been turned out and some forced to leave the district.

“NGO Q “name supplied” has been ordered to leave and during the Constitution making process all NGOs although this applied nationally were ordered to stop activities and some NGOs who are prominent in Child participation could not reach out to their targeted population and such political intervention and control stifles our operations.”

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The existence of a duality of converging and diverging views between and among different social groups and actors within community point to the fact that no group in social reality is homogenous. Such differences as pointed out by Eade (1997) inform ‘personal’ dynamics which need continuous assessment to locate it into a wider pattern. The challenges orphans and other vulnerable children face are multi-faceted and will need different approaches to combat them depending with one’s standing in a social reality.
For any intervention to root out challenges orphans and other vulnerable children face in accessing welfare and protection it requires the conceptualization of social realities and challenges that characterize the social environment from both interveners and beneficiaries. In line with Long’s Actor Oriented approach which requires the people to understand complex relations which they are part of beyond their immediate personal experiences, issues of differences in social fields should not be ignored. As shown by orphans and other vulnerable children in this study, they have a different comprehension of social relations and realities that they are in. They pointed at the death of their parents and lack of resources of those whom they stay with as causes of their being vulnerable and as avenues to address their plight.

The issue of kinship ties in the traditional family system as pointed by Mphahlele, (cited in Mbizi. L. 1995) is a crucial component in the fabric of a social relationship. Social players such as the extended family members, state and non state actors, and communities among others help in combating and addressing some of the challenges that orphans and other vulnerable children face. Craig pointed out that his extended family members and the community members come to his aid in various ways. This can be substantiated by the move taken by the Department of Social Services and NGOs (Tsungirirai) that of reaching out to the children as beneficiaries through the extended family and the community at large. For instance the reason behind distribution of inputs to vulnerable households and revamping the Zunde raMambo/isiphala seNkosi (chief’s granary) a community initiative aims at reaching out to the child without separating or categorizing them from fellow children in the household.

Families and individuals forms the fabric of society, an intervention that is sustainable is one which is holistic and targets the whole community that, if it is empowered it will create its own safety nets to combat vulnerability in its midst. This is also in line with Lassiter’s (1983) acknowledgment that child protection and welfare provision in traditional African societies was well guarded and enshrined in the informal arrangements that existed. He points out that safety nets were in place for vulnerable members and existed at community level down to family level. Such institutions have been weakened in the past years and rendered a lot of children vulnerable and saw humanitarian agencies and the state coming in heavily in ways that of late were incompatible and not sustainable.
In the study it was established that various welfare and protection mechanisms are still in existence. These mechanisms as Mushunje (2006) acknowledged largely existed in name. Influences of modernization, urbanization, industrialization among others brought changes and challenges that depleted the extended families, communities, organizations of charity and others’ capacities in the provision of welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children. Encroachment of urbanization, industrialization and modernization ideas according to Lachman et al (2002) resulted into instances where today’s child virtually belongs to no one in particular. The families and community ties due to influences stated has increasingly become mobile and social relations are no longer being shaped by kinship ties only but more increasingly being informed by professional or occupational relationships. Families leave their extended families or communities in search of employment in farms and towns and leave behind the aged and the young, who are economically not productive and hence productivity in communities decline and is thereby affected by chronic droughts and food shortages.

With an increased separation of family members from their family and community, prolonged spousal separation has fuelled infidelity and multiple sexual partners whereby the separated couples seek sexual gratification from other partners outside matrimony hence increasing chances of infection by HIV and AIDS therefore increasing death rate and vulnerability within these communities and families. In the study it has been noted on the children who were key informants that their biological parents had moved in cities and towns as well as neighboring farms in search of employment only to come back ill and passed on leaving them in the care of their aged grandparents.

Mr. Mwendamberi pointed out that in the absence of one being infected with HIV and AIDS people are now being infected by a profit motive. Dube (1999) indicated that orphans and other vulnerable in history benefitted from social relations that existed such as the concept of borrowing and lending, where the borrower had an obligation to return and the lender could ignore if the borrower was extremely poor, and borrowing did not imply immediate repayment and no interest accrued. The research has established that the communities now have become profit oriented and the philanthropy is slowly being done away with. The search for profit has created adverse conditions and challenges on orphans and other vulnerable children were the
wealth or the privileged depend on exploiting the circumstances of the vulnerable families to harvest more profits. Most orphans and other vulnerable children as indicated by Pamela will be out on the privileged’s fields to work (maricho) for their fees or to be paid in kind when others would be in class.

According to Long and Villarreal, (1993) and Acre and Long, (1987 and 1992) pointed that interface analysis aims at elucidating social discontinuity and linkages present in situations and to identify the organizational and cultural means of reproducing or transforming them. In the study it has been noted that social discontinuities are experienced when death of a family head or breadwinner occurs, the advent of a profit motive, movement of family or community members in and out also presence social discontinuity were ties and affinity is lost or compromised between the family and community and the member.

Linkages are found within societies in the practices that are adopted and practiced by state and non state actors, individuals, churches, community among other players. To circumvent problems of drop outs in schools the government of Zimbabwe through the department of Social Services and Ministry of Education Sports and Culture availed the Basic Education Assistance Programme (BEAM) to assist vulnerable children to attain education. The NGOs also as non state actors avail projects such as small livestock rearing where the vulnerable families are given capital to start buying small livestock that they will sell as they have grown and increased to cater for expenses in the care of family needs. NGOs also make their own school fees fundraising and pay for the children in difficult circumstances. The community as shown in the study although in terms of United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) can be deemed as perpetrating child labor as it offers manual tasks in return for a cash payment or in kind while the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC) recognize it as child development. All these linkages are provided to address the plight of orphans and other vulnerable children face. It is at the interface of these actors that linkages can be strengthened and be used as means of problem bridging and transforming the dilapidated cultural and organizational social fields in providing welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children.
In the study issues of language as Villarreal (1993) has pointed out has been discovered as a tool that create meanings and reactions. Vulnerability is conceptualized in terms of meanings attached by the state, non state, community authorities and children. Meanings are enshrined in the language structures and this reinforces one’s world view. In the study the Chief, Councilor and children conceptualized an orphan as a child with both parents deceased. Such kind of conceptualization affects other children in accessing welfare and protection since preference will be on double orphans although in some circumstances would be in a better position than a maternal or paternal orphan.

Tradition has handed down until recently that accumulation of wealth is the only way to fight vulnerabilities. According to Mr. Mwendamberi’s views, cultural practices as polygamy and widow inheritance help in the creation and maintenance of wealth. The more wives and children one had in the past could make solutions and capacities of families and communities to address challenges. He pointed out that in polygamy when one mother dies the children are not orphaned as the other mother takes over responsibility and generally children are everyone’s responsibility in a family. If the father was to die widow inheritance was to ensue with the younger or elder brother taking over the family with its assets. Such ideas have generated confrontation at the interface with ‘modern’ ideas condemning the practice in favor of monogamy and the drafting of ‘wills’ to partition the deceased’s estate. Children are caught in between family and statutes wrangles were in most cases the estate is taken away or where the children are awarded the estate upon complications or when the estate is done away with the relatives would not be willing to help the children.

Conflicts at the interface are also evident by the fear expressed by the chief and the councilor on issues of rights. Rights advocacy NGOs in the past carried out campaigns on child rights without emphasizing responsibilities. Rights should go hand in hand with responsibilities; children were taught rights and the responsibility component ignored. Social disjunctions are created when children became too conscious of their rights than their duties as children within families and communities. Issues of child labor and physical abuse become very difficult to delimit since most of the tasks carried out in rural areas are mainly manual and forms of instilling discipline within families and institutions as schools is also physical. It is the criterion that is used to denote
abuse physical or emotional as pointed out by Mrs. Tarwirei that causes disagreements between the actors and the community, but however adherence should be made to the state statutes.

In agreement with Long (1992) continued and sustained interactions encourages the development of boundaries and shared expectations that shape the interaction of participants in the provision of welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children and that over time the interface itself becomes an organized entity of interlocking relationships. In the study the interface of the ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ means of remedy to the plight of orphans and other vulnerable children in accessing welfare and protection has seen the establishment of task forces that look in the circumstances and conditions of children especially children in difficult circumstances. The task forces known as Child Protection Committees have been formed comprising of the state through the Department of Social Services, non state actors (NGOs), National Aids Council (NAC), other government ministries, communities, business community among other stakeholders.

Social networking based on kinship and community ties although weakening as well as organizations and government departments gives common interest at the interface where the actors converge to intervene in the circumstances children face. As shown by Craig who exchanged his labor by herding Mr. Masunda’s cattle in return for tillage and clothes from his elder son. Networking is also evident with the recent exercise of the compilation of orphans and other vulnerable children village area register with the Department of Social Services spearheading the exercise in the NAP for OVC programme. The village area register funded by Global Fund Round 8 will be kept by village secretaries and the Department of Social Services to be used by all humanitarian organizations and other assistance programmes such as BEAM among other programmes meant for orphans and other vulnerable children. The village/area register will be used as a source of drawing beneficiaries and its compilation is a multi-sectoral approach.

Villarreal (1993) posits that although interface analysis presupposes some degree of common interest, it also has a propensity to generate conflicts due to contradicting motives, interest and objectives or due to unequal power relations. Negotiations at the interface are influenced by power relations. In this study children have shown little power to negotiate at the interface with
traditional leaders, government authorities and NGOs having much power to negotiate with varying degrees at the interface.

The government through the Department of Social Services has the constitutional mandate to look into the issues of children and have the authority to register NGOs dealing with child issues and other humanitarian issues and has the authority also to recommend deregistration of NGOs in the presence of sustentative evidence that points to them not carrying out their mandate or carrying out activities outside their mandate. The NGOs approaches the interface with resources and ‘knowledge.’ They decide areas to operate and activities to carry out. Their power is premised on their resources that they have which other partners do not have. Traditional authorities most often than not are supported by politicians and that make them powerful. They also approach negotiations at the interface with their authority as gatekeepers to the community and also the knowledge they have on their community both environment and its people. For instance Mrs. Tarwirei and Ms. Nhaka confided that the District Administrator (D.A) on political grounds turned down NGOs who wanted to operate in the area and issued instructions to the chiefs to instruct NGOs to halt activities during the constitution making process although this was a nationwide instruction meaning the beneficiaries where temporarily cut from services. Foucault stated that everyone has power and knowledge, it is however evident that others decide not to use their power and knowledge and some use their power to control others at the interface thereby impacting positively or negatively in this case on the plight of orphans and other vulnerable children in accessing welfare and protection.

Mahler in Ly et al postulated that

“Young people are powerless not because they are young, but because they are young within societies, communities and groups in which the structures is verbal, the leadership is the attribute of the dominant adult classes, groups and persons and the status of youth established and imposed by the latter is a marginal, present less and future less one”.

In such situations orphans and other vulnerable children cannot negotiate and navigate hierarchies of negotiations at the interface and thereby making it difficult to lead and shape kinds of activities and interventions meant for them in their own standing in the social field.
CONCLUSION

The study has revealed an array of critical issues regarding the plight of orphans and other vulnerable children in accessing welfare and protection. It has established that the challenges faced by orphans and other vulnerable children posit an interface process where different actors state and non state as well as communities and other stakeholders interact and negotiate how activities and intervention should be carried out. Above all the study managed to look at critical areas which causes and need to be addressed to alleviate challenges orphans and other vulnerable children face. The study based on the different ideas provided by key informants established that convergence and divergence exist in the provision of welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children and that different actors involved poses different personalities which are informed by the wider socio-economic and cultural environment.

It is crucial to note that the provision of welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children is multi-sectoral and disjunctions in such a set up are always anticipated given the often conflicting life worlds, social fields, situations, cognitive viewpoints among others, ways of bridging, accommodating, including and tolerating such different views should be searched. This can be seen in the effort being made by the concerned actors in working together such as in forming child protection committees as well as the compilation of the orphans and other vulnerable children village area register. Such constant involvement of all actors helps to transform the otherwise conflictual approach at the interface into a cordial consortium in providing welfare and protection to orphans and other vulnerable children.

The study has shown welfare and protection challenges orphans and other vulnerable children faces, the failing capacities of mechanisms of welfare and protection institutions as well as the impact of ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ relationships in helping the plight of orphans and vulnerable children. A commitment on the part of all actors has been noted and it is however the scarcity of resources to use in trying to combat challenges faced by these orphans and other children in difficult circumstances. Informants have acknowledged the existence of challenges among orphans and other vulnerable children in accessing welfare and protection. The study also noted the continued marginalization and lack of engagement of children in programmes meant for them
which should be led by them but which they have no say in their implementation and operation as another challenge.

By and large it can be seen that vulnerabilities can be mitigated in the presence of a concerted effort and political will to deliver on the plight of orphans and other vulnerable children in terms of their welfare and protection. A number of mechanisms exist already that can be revamped and capacitated to address challenges faced by children in difficult circumstances. It is pertinent also to acknowledge that even in the presence of seemingly adequate resources vulnerability cannot be completely done away with similarly conflicts at the interface with different actors cannot be done away with but both challenges can be minimized if the best interest of the child is to be tabled first.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of issues linked to the plight faced by orphans and other vulnerable children in accessing welfare and protection and challenges of the interface of different actors have emerged from this study. If addressed these could alleviate the challenges and improve the circumstances of orphans and other vulnerable children. These are as follows

- To combat challenges orphans and other vulnerable children face in terms of their welfare, the actors need to capacitate community institutions and practices that are present in the communities where vulnerabilities exist.

- Indigenous knowledge systems should be taken aboard and strengthened where they lack. This helps against conflicts and alienating the community which should however be the beneficiaries.

- The Government, NGOs and communities should resuscitate the Zunde raMambo concept and avail enough resources in time that the communities should look after its vulnerable members.
• Enough resources should be channeled towards the strengthening of child protection committees and literature production to increase awareness on the available welfare and protection services. Communities should be strongly targeted and taught on child rights with responsibilities.

• Children should be allowed to give solutions to their challenges. Child participation should be encouraged and increased in the decision making process of the community as well as institutions that directly affect them such as in schools and churches.

By and large it is the availing of resources to all sectors that work towards mitigation of challenges that orphans and other vulnerable children face.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


RESEARCH TOOLS USED IN THE COLLECTION OF FIELD DATA

The research mainly relied on the use of individual in-depth interviews using semi-structured questions and unstructured interviews on purposively sampled informants leaning much on expert sampling. Use of registers from implementing organizations within Kavero village which constitutes secondary data was also used in both selection and interviewing of the informants.

Research Questions used

- Are you aware of problems faced by orphans and other vulnerable children in accessing welfare and protection? If yes
- What are the challenges these children?
- What do you think are the causes of these problems?
- How best can these problems be addressed?
- Are there any forms of mechanisms of welfare and protection for orphans and other vulnerable children that you know? If yes
- What are these mechanisms of welfare and protection?
- How adequate are they in mitigating the problems orphans and other vulnerable children face?
- As a Organization how capacitated are you in dealing with problems orphans and other vulnerable children face?
- How has the community at large responded to your activities/intervention?
- Any problems that you have encountered with other stakeholders in implementing activities to alleviate the plight of orphans and other vulnerable children?

NB Since the research made use of children also as sources of information these are the questions that were administered to them.

- Do you have any problems you face as a orphan or vulnerable child? If yes
- What are the problems that you face?
- What do you think are the main causes of your problems?
- How do you think your problems can be best solved?
- Are you aware of any mechanisms of welfare and protection in existence? If yes
- What are they?
- How adequate are they to responding to your needs?
- How have the government and your community helped in your challenges?