

Worst forms of child Labor: A psychosocial study of
children scavenging on the main waste dumpsite of
Addis Ababa

By

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Acknowledgment.....	I
Table of Contents.....	II
List of Tables.....	III
Acronyms.....	IV
Abstract.....	V
Chapter One	8
1. Introduction.....	8
1.1. Background	8
1.2. Statement of the problem	10
1.3. Research Questions	12
1.4 Objectives of the study	12
1.5 Significance of the study	13
1.6 Delimitation and Limitations of the study.....	14
Delimitation	14
Limitation	14
1.7 Operational definitions	14
Chapter Two	16
2. Literature Review	16
2.1 Defining the concept of Scavenging	16
2.2. The situation of scavenging peoples.....	17
2.3 Children Scavengers.....	17
2.4 Reasons why children are scavenging.....	18
2.5 Problems associated with scavenging work.....	21

2.6 Psychosocial problems of scavenging children	25
2.7 Situation of scavenging children in Addis Ababa.....	28
2.8 Social Relationships of Scavenging Children	29
Chapter Three	31
3. Methodology.....	31
3.1 Study Area	31
3.2 Data Sources and Sampling	31
3.3 Tools and Techniques.....	32
3.4 Data Organization and Analysis	32
3.5 Instrument Development.....	32
Chapter Four	33
4. Finding and Analysis.....	33
4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents	33
Age of the Participants	34
Years of Engagement in Scavenging	34
Sex	35
Place of Living.....	35
Place of Birth	36
Family Situation	37
Current Living Conditions of the Respondents.....	37
Health Problems of the Respondents' Parents	38
Education Status of the Respondents	39
4.2. Push and Pull Factors of Scavenging.	40
4.2.1 Economic Problems	40
4.2.2 Peer Pressure and the Presence of Dump Site in the Village	43

4.2.3 Home Environment	47
4.3. Social Experiences of Scavenging Children and Societal Reactions.....	49
4.3.1 Social Relationships of Scavenging Children.	49
Social Relationships of Scavenging Children with their Peers.....	49
Social relationship of scavenging children with their family	52
4.3.2 Perception and Reaction of the Society towards Scavenging Children	54
4.4 Health and Safety Problems Associated with the Practice of Scavenging...	59
4.4.1 Injury and health problems	59
4.4.2 Sexual Assaults and Harassment	61
4.4.3 Forced use of Labor.....	63
4.5. Psychological Status of Scavenging Children	64
4.5.1 Characteristics of Scavenging Children.....	64
4.5.2 Future Orientation of Scavenging Children	66
Chapter Five	69
5. Discussion of the Major Findings	69
Chapter Six.....	76
6. Conclusion and Recommendations.....	76
6.1 Conclusion.....	76
6.2 Recommendations.....	80
References	
Appendixes	

List of Tables

Tables	pages
Table 1: Age, Sex and Years of Engagement in Scavenging.....	26
Table 2: Place of Birth, Family Situation and Living Arrangement of the participants.....	29
Table 3: Health Problems of the Respondents' Parents.....	31
Table 4: Reasons for Dropping Out of School.....	32
Table 5: Physical Injury Associated with Scavenging and Sex.....	52
Table 6: Health Problems Associated with Scavenging and Sex.....	53

Acronyms

ACSO	Alem Children Support Organization
AIDS-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CDS	Children in Difficult Situation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labor Organization
NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
UNCRC	United Nation Convention on the Rights of Child
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor

Abstract

The general objective of this study was to identify and describe the psychosocial aspects of children scavenging on the main waste dumpsite of Addis Ababa. It also identified the main reasons for children involvement in scavenging, their social experience, problems, psychological status, and viewed their situation with in light of the Country's legislation.

The study used qualitative research method. Availability sampling technique was used to select the informants and discussants of the study. Open-ended and close-ended interview schedule and focus group discussion were used as primary data collection techniques.

The findings indicated that economic problem, unstable home environment, peer pressure and the presence of the dumpsite in the study area were found to be the major reasons that forced these children into scavenging. Moreover these children experienced work related injuries, health problems, verbal and sexual abuse, social exclusion and discrimination. The finding also indicated that these children had experienced social relationship difficulty, negative public perception and reaction. The study also indicated that some of these children developed behavioral problems and became addicts of drugs after they were involved in scavenging. Despite these problems the study also indicated that these children had positive future orientation in spite of their problems.

Based on the above findings some preventive and rehabilitative recommendations were recommended in order to reduce the problem and improve the wellbeing of scavenging children.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Ethiopia has shown its commitment to children's rights by making the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child a part of the law of the Land. At the national level protection to children is provided by the constitution of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995) which adopts the UNCRC and other international conventions. Ethiopia also ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) in 1999. The convention places on the ratifying states the obligation to fix a minimum age for admission to employment. The minimum age at which children can be employed in hazardous work is 18 years with 16 years under strict condition for all countries. The Ethiopian labor Proclamation of 2003 also prohibits the engagement of children in hazardous work. It also forbids the employment of children under the age of 14.

Throughout cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America, varying numbers of poor individuals survive by salvaging materials from the waste stream. These people recover materials to sell for reuse or recycling, as well as diverse items for their own consumption. Those individuals are generally known as 'scavengers' or 'rag pickers' (Medina,1997).According to Bartone (1988) cited in Medina(1997) most studies report that human scavengers constitute poor segments of the population of developing countries. Scavenging is a widespread occurrence; where one can find on the streets or in garbage dumps of third world cities

people collecting all kinds of materials for reuse or recycling. Scavengers face multiple hazards and problems.

Due to their daily contact with garbage, scavengers are usually associated with dirt, disease, squalor. They are perceived as a nuisance, a symbol of backwardness or even as criminals. They survive in a hostile physical and social environment. Even though scavengers are not always the poorest of the poor, their occupation is generally ascribed as the lowest status.

Children who are engaged in waste picking or scavenging, in waste sorting for recycling purposes, could easily be affected by the hazardous nature of the work. The ILO Convention No. 182 of 1999 defines hazardous work as any activity or occupation that by its nature or the circumstances under which it is carried out is likely to harm the safety, health (physical or mental) and moral development of children.

In spite of the existence of several legal instruments to address the problem of the worst forms of child labor, waste scavenging by children remains a serious problem in Addis Ababa. Even though comprehensive studies have not been made about the problems, a number of children are considered working in highly dangerous and unhealthy work places in the informal sector of work as well as in the dumpsite (ILO, 2008). These children are forgotten for the last so many years and life has continued as something normal in the waste dumping site. Scavenging on such a waste dumping site is full of risk and particularly affects the wellbeing of children.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Although comprehensive research is lacking, a significant number of children are estimated to be engaged in the worst forms of child labor in the solid waste management sector in Addis Ababa. According to ILO (2008) baseline survey everyday on average 200 children are scavenging recyclable material on the waste dumpsite 'Koshe'. Furthermore the ILO (2008) survey report shows that children as young as 3-5 years were also seen to accompany their mothers who are searching recyclable materials on the dumpsite.

It may be hard for many to imagine what it would be like to live in such conditions, but that is the daily reality for hundreds of scavenging children who live as garbage collectors. Many of the residents of the waste dumpsite make their living by digging through the influx of food, trash, scavenging for plastic, cardboard, paper, wood, glass, metal and other items that can be eaten or sold to recycling agents. The meager earnings made by one person are not enough to buy food even for a day. Families are forced to climb the hills of garbage each day, hoping that together they can earn enough to feed everyone in the family (Deribe, 2006).

In such struggle, the whole family moves to the waste dumpsite and spends the whole day collecting what they want. These children live without education, care and affection of their guardians or parents. The parents have no time to manage their family and discipline their children. The children experience abuse from nearly everyone. The community treats them with contempt, and the older scavengers and street children brutalize them. They are easy victims

of drug dealers, who turn them into addiction and engage them in peddling of drugs. They are exploited by parents as well as by others. In short these children are inadequately clothed, fed or loved. They are victims of family violence, including physical and sexual abuse. They are unloved, undernourished, underweight and uneducated. Society often tries to forget them, ignore them or sometimes even deny that they exist (Sevingsen, 2000).

Deribe (2006) stated that children scavenging on 'Koshe' waste dumpsite are exposed to hazards the whole day in the absence of well developed strong preventive immune and detoxification systems. This situation exposes them to all kinds of health, social, psychological and economic problems at their young age. The large number of parents dying of HIV/AIDS, and other diseases leave behind increasing number of vulnerable children, young children with no security or any other person to take care for of them. Many of these orphaned children living with their destitute grandmothers or guardians end up living and working on the streets, including waste picking activities. They also suffer from trauma due to being insulted, neglected, abused, and abandoned (Medina, 1997). The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand and describe the psychosocial aspects of children scavenging on the main waste dumpsite of Addis Ababa. Hence, this study tries to answer the following research questions:

1.3. Research Questions

1. What are the major factors for the engagement of children in scavenging?
2. What is the nature of scavenging children social interactions?
3. What are the health and safety problems associated with the practice of scavenging?
4. What is the psychological status (behavior and future orientation) of scavenging children?

1.4 Objectives of the study

This study has the following objectives.

The general objective of this study was to identify and describe the psychosocial aspects of children scavenging in the main waste dumpsite of Addis Ababa.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. Identify factors that lead to engagement of children in scavenging.
2. Identify the social experiences of scavenging children (such as the interaction of the child with family members, neighbors, and peer groups) and the reaction of the society towards the child.
3. Explore the problems (physical, health and abuses) scavenging children face due to the nature of the work and the work setting.
4. Find out the psychological status (particularly behavior and future orientation) of scavenging children.

5. Come up with possible recommendation that may contribute towards changing the lives of children involved in scavenging.

1.5 Significance of the study

According to Constance (2004) garbage picking is among the most dangerous and socially marginalized occupations. Through constant exposure to hazardous material and toxic fumes at landfills, scavenging children are highly exposed to harsh risk of injury and diseases. Many garbage scavengers tend to be ostracized because of their association with trash. Therefore, this study is significant for the following contribution it entails:

- It can offer information on the condition of these children for NGO's and government organizations engaged in the protection of children wellbeing, and thereby contribute to the welfare of children scavengers.
- Information obtained from this study indicates directions to government and non-government organizations on how to offer organized help for these children.
- It gives information on the psychological and social impact of scavenging on the behavior of children and raise public awareness on the plight of these children.
- It may serve as a springboard for other researchers who might be interested to make investigations in a similar area.

1.6 Delimitation and Limitations of the study

Delimitation

The study was done on 'Koshe' the main waste dumpsite of Addis Ababa. Hence the study did not included children scavenging on other areas like 'Atikelet tira" and 'Merkato' area. Therefore the result of this finding is delimited to children scavengers in this particular area.

Limitation

In undertaking of the study, there were some limitations that appeared to be barriers, which assumed to affect the findings of the study. The major limitations faced were:

- ❖ Lack of comprehensive data in the study topic and the scarcity of relevant sources related to children scavengers in the Ethiopian situation have been the greatest challenges that the researcher encountered during the process of the study. Thus, the researcher hopes that these limitations would be taken into consideration while reading this study paper.

1.7 Operational definitions

- ❖ Psychosocial problems: are problems related to their psychological dimensions of self concept, self-esteem, emotional problems, behavior problems and future orientation. And social dimension such as family, marriage, relationship, friendship, socialization, schooling, work of scavenging children.

❖ Scavenging (waste picking): Manual sorting and picking of recyclable/reusable materials from mixed wastes at legal and illegal landfills, dumpsites, street bins and piles, transfer points, as well as waste collection trucks.

Child: The term child generally encompasses a person under 18 years of age. In this paper those individuals considered as a child are those who are under the age of 18 and above the age of 15.

Child scavengers: child scavengers are children working manual sorting and picking of recyclable/reusable materials from mixed wastes on the waste dumpsite with age range of 15- 18 years of age.

Worst Forms of Child Labor: is the work by its nature or a circumstance in which it is carried out is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children by exposing them to physical, psychological and sexual risks.

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining the concept of Scavenging

According to Constance (2004) the term scavenging could have different names depending on the local language of the place where they work and on the items they collect. For example 'yekoshe lejoch' in Addis Ababa (Deribe, 2006), which means children of garbage will be used in this research work. There are other synonymous names such as trash pickers, garbage collector or waste collectors. However, all the literature used in this research work and as witnessed in the experience of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, the universal names for people working on the waste collection or pick wastes for personal consumption and/or for recycling are called scavengers or rag pickers Medina (1997). This term will also be used in this research paper. Scavengers are humans who are looking for waste materials, which could be eaten or sold for recyclers from the waste disposals. Since this research work uses literature from international readers and resources the research uses universally known terms like; scavenging, scavengers and scavenging children. Similarly to identify children from the whole scavenging population the term scavenging children will be used particularly for this group of scavengers.

2.2. The situation of scavenging peoples

According to Medina (2000) most studies report that human scavengers constitute disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of the population. Scavengers face multiple hazards and problems. Due to their daily contact with garbage, scavengers are usually associated with dirt, disease, squalor, and perceived as a nuisance, a symbol of backwardness, and even as criminals. They survive in a hostile physical and social environment. In many countries scavenging work belongs to minority groups. Those can be religious minorities. For example in Egypt the Coptic Christians used to make up the majority of waste collectors and waste pickers. In Kolkata India, the Muslim minorities are over represented in scavenging (Medina, 1997). Also ethnic- cultural minorities can be found in the scavenging sector ILO (2004). In Addis Ababa according to Deribe (2006) most of scavenging peoples in the waste dump site known as 'Koshe' are the descendant people who are affected by leprosy and wounded soldiers and displaced soldiers who have been living in and around their former military recovery center.

2.3 Children Scavengers

According to a thematic evaluation report of ILO (2004) on scavenging work, children are found to be involved in various stages of the waste picking process. The most well-known involvement is in picking on dumpsites, with their families or in groups with a leader or recruited by a middleman. They can also be found picking in the streets, individually or in groups. The most invisible involvement of children in this sector is in homes. While their parents

pick waste in the streets or collect it from households, children (and women) often sort the mixed waste at home so that it can be sold. Both boys and girls can be found scavenging, but girls are much less involved in street picking. In Tanzania teenage boys clearly dominated dump and street picking and this appears to be true in Kenya as well. The age of child scavengers ranges from 4-5 years to 18years. Although detailed information on numbers, age and gender of scavenging children was not available in most cases both boys and girls found scavenging worldwide. According to ILO (2004) the majority of scavenging children in Tanzania comes from the community located immediate next to dumpsite. Similarly, the majority of scavenging children's in Addis Ababa are dwellers of the community immediate next to the dump site (Deribe, 2006).

2.4 Reasons why children are scavenging

Regarding the reasons why children are scavenging in the dumpsite there are various reasons why children work; Insufficient family income, helplessness or homelessness, inadequate or poor child rearing practice, deterioration of kin based or traditional support system, streetism, family pathology and societal stress associated with rapid industrialization and urbanization are the main reasons that directly or indirectly related to form children scavengers (Deribe, 2006). These are the push factors. In addition to these reasons the extended use of wastes and psychological problems are the pull factors that pull children to become scavenging children (Deribe, 2006).

All the push and pull factors are shared factors or related factors with streetism. Being founded on the street and becoming street children is one of the sources of scavenging children group. All street children, directly or indirectly are involved in scavenging particularly in crisis time where there is no means to maintain life. Street children are the one who are scavenging wastes from garbage boxes found on community garbage collection sites, and when there is no business like begging and vendor on street to feed oneself, they go to the waste dumpsite for scavenging (Le Roux, et al. 1998).

Insufficient income: desperate families often rely on their children and encourage them to gather more wastes from dumpsites in order to maximize their earning and maintain family life. Some family could not survive without every members of the family contribution. Poor parents cannot meet the needs of a growing family. This forces children to go to waste dumping sites to scavenge with the aim of increasing family income and maximizing its purchasing power (Le Roux et al.,1998).

The experience in Rwanda shows also homelessness or being an orphan as one of the causes for being street children and working as scavengers (Veale and Dona, 2003).The prolonged civil war, emigration, imprisonment of parents and poverty in general contribute to these problems. No one is there to fulfill parental roles due to the fact that their parents either died or emigrated. Therefore, they become street children and for their daily consumption the children do street business like begging as well as scavenging. In Rwanda

homelessness or being an orphan is one reason for becoming a scavenger (Veale and Dona, 2003).

Poor and inadequate child rearing practices are one of the many reasons that force the child to go away from home, join street life and scavenging on streets and dump sites. According to research carried out in Yaoundé, Cameroon, there is a high positive relationship existing between home rearing patterns and the child found on street. Authoritarian parenting revealed as the major factor responsible for children running away from home. Furthermore, being found as street children by itself is a fertile condition to be scavenger and in the absence of wastes in street to be scavenged street children go to towards garbage dumpsites and join scavenging groups (Le Roux et al., 1998).

The expanding use of paper, plastic, glass packaging in food and other consumer products and parallel growth of industries that recycle these materials and unemployment has led thousands of people to garbage picking full or part time (Deribe, 2006).

Economic and social upheavals have led to the breakdown of traditional family structure and values. Family disruption, in the form of death, abandonment, separation, and divorce, has shrunk family size still further often resulting in poor, single parent are often mother headed households. This leaves children vulnerable and with the general absence of community and government support, they have few options in times of crisis. One option is becoming scavenger on streets and waste dumpsites. This is the result of urbanization,

more generally modernization. Modernization is the major cause to dismantle the traditional or kin based support system. Hence, children become helpless and homeless, and are forced to go to waste dumping sites for scavenging in search of food, clothing, and recyclable materials (Soda, 1996).

In circumstances where there is alcoholism, physical or sexual abuse or neglect, children are motivated to leave home, or may even be driven out. Other reasons for turning in to the streets include overcrowding, social disruption caused by frequent relocation (migrant labor) as well as parent child friction in reconstituted families. Family pathology, which is linked to socioeconomic also, drives many children from home. According to Swart (1990) street children in Guatemala, as in Peru, may have been abandoned or left home because of physical or sexual abuse, poverty, or general parental neglect. Such push factors leads to the child to street and then to scavenging site, where there is little chance at least to gate food and shelter with children of similar identities. Problems associated with boredom, humiliation, and failures experienced by children in school are some of the psychological factors. Others are drawn to the street to be 'part of the action' or are motivated to seek a better life than the bitter one to which they would be destined at home.

2.5 Problems associated with scavenging work

Informal recycling has traditionally been practiced by outcasts and marginal groups in developing countries such as gypsies, rural migrants, immigrants and members of religious minorities. In India, the Harijans are a cast of untouchables that deal with waste collection and recycling. In Cairo, the

Zabbaleen informal recyclers belong to a Christian minority. Isolation as a part of social exclusion leads societies of scavengers to develop their own habits, customs, beliefs and values. As a result of their marginalization, they are often a subject of harassment by the authorities and police. Female scavengers in particular may be considered easy sexual targets. Poor living conditions, limited access to facilities and infrastructure, no provision of urban services such as water supply and sewerage and absence of social safety networks are typical of scavenging communities. This is particularly true for communities that live in shanty towns on or around dump site (Medina, 2000). There are high health risks associated with this type of labor. According to Castillo (1990) cited in Medina (1997), Mexico City scavengers have a life expectancy of 35 years, while the general population's is 67 years. The prevalence of infectious diseases is high. And a study of the Zabbaleen in Port Said, Egypt, showed that the infant mortality rate was 1/3 (i.e., one death of an infant under one year of age out of every 3 live births). The prevalence of enteric and parasitic diseases among the Zabbaleen is "much higher" than the one for the region. And in Cairo, one in four babies born in the scavenger communities dies before reaching their first year (Meyer, 1987 cited in Medina, 1997). In Manila, more than 35 diseases have been identified on scavenger communities and slums, including diarrhea, typhoid fever, cholera, dysentery, tuberculosis, anthrax, poliomyelitis, skin disorders, pneumonia and malaria. Sharing the same idea with Medina, Tadesse (2007) stated all aspects of the solid waste management cycle (generation, collection, transfer, recycling, reuse and disposal) are

associated with multiple Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) risks, mostly beyond acceptable levels. Moreover, these risks themselves often become the source of increased risks for workers found in another phase of the waste management cycle. Scavengers perform their tasks under “accidents/diseases waiting to happen” conditions. For them, accidents and illnesses are foregone conclusions, and it is only a matter of time before one of the many potential accidents and illnesses attack them. By observing scavengers in action one can simply conclude that they are already adapted to working in hazardous situations. Nevertheless, there should not be any complacency as there are always limits to adapting to the environment. Children are very sensitive to work hazards than adults. They are not only more susceptible to hazards than adults but also more strongly affected by work hazards. Children differ from adult workers most importantly because they are still in the process of growing up. Their normal development can be severely endangered by work hazards. For instance carrying heavy load can prematurely distort their growing bodies. Moreover, children suffer more from chemical hazards and they have less resistance to diseases (Assefa, 2000).

Imperative dimensions of child development that can be affected by child labor over a long period of time are: *physical development* including overall health, coordination, strength, vision, needed to survive and contribute to adulthood; *cognitive development* including literacy, basic cultural knowledge, vocational skills and other knowledge required to live a reasonably successful life; and

Emotional development including adequate self-esteem, family attachment, feelings of love and acceptance (Assefa, 2000).

Physical Hazard and Health Problems Researchers have shown that because of differences between children and adults, child workers are considerably more vulnerable to work place health and physical hazards. Occupational accidents are determined by the physical working environment, tools and equipment used to perform tasks. Child workers are more vulnerable to occupational injuries. The injuries include burns, cuts, electric shocks and even loss of limbs, eyesight and hearing damage. They also suffer from the effects of fatigue due to long hours and monotonous work and malnutrition resulting from food intake. The other factor which contributes to accident is the competition among children to retain job (Basu, 1999).

Psychological Work Hazards: One of the most serious and most common nonphysical consequences of child labor is psychological work hazards. Working children compare themselves with other children that do not work and they suffer from the feeling of low self-esteem. Some child migrants also suffer from lack of social and economic support as they are separated from their parents and friends. In addition, work separates child laborers from educational opportunities and thereby filters away their chance to develop the essential skills that they need in the future as adults (Assefa, 2000).

Effects of work on Education: Education holds the promise of improving survival, wellbeing and wealth. Despite the fact that education is highly

spreading in the recent decades, the problem of making it viable for all children still remains. Working children have low school enrollment, attendance and completing rate than non-working children. Even after school enrollment, working children tend to lag behind that of their non-working peers (Boyden & Myers, 1998). Le Roux (1998) also stated that although there is high level of school dropouts, most of scavenging children would like to go back to school in order to secure a better future. Usually, they desire educational opportunities to improve their chances of obtaining a stable job, but their prospects are dim due to lack of competent skill and academic achievements. The longer they spend on the dumping site the worse their prognosis for educational achievement.

2.6 Psychosocial problems of scavenging children

According to ILO (2007) such form of child labor as scavenging in the waste dumping site deprives children of their childhood and is an obstacle to their physical, emotional and social development. Children involved in the worst forms of child labor suffer major physical and psychological problems. The physical consequences may be the result of involvement in hazardous work, physical abuse, and lack of proper nutrition, risky sexual behavior (exposure to HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other sexually transmitted diseases) and lack of medical care. Child labor affects the child's short- and long- term development. Additionally, the possible lack of a permanent home, constant moving from one place to another, and uncertainty about what tomorrow might bring, prevent children from developing their own social support network. At the same time,

the child is subjected to negative reactions from other people, such as exclusion, stigmatization and labeling (“the beggar”). This can lead to low self-esteem and high vulnerability. The lack of a stable environment and the negative reactions of others combine to create a distorted perception of the self, which proves detrimental to his/her personal development. However, experience shows that child laborers may also develop a coping mechanism of having a sense of pride at being able to survive in difficult circumstances. But such pride is often deceptive and prevents social reintegration; unless the reintegration process integrates this survival capacity of the child and is also based on the possible competencies acquired by the child during his/her experience of child labor. The child’s psychological reactions to child labor depend on the nature of the event (single or repeated), the child’s resources to adapt (the child’s protective abilities, emotional and social support resources), the risks s/he is exposed to, and the child’s age. Protective/risk factors that play a role in defining the psychological consequences of child labor are in fact similar to the protective/risk factors that define the likely hood of the child entering child labor in the first place. Consequently, not all forms of child labor are psychologically traumatic because of the protective factors (social, cognitive and emotional resources) that shield the child from the traumatic consequences of child labor. One child may develop minimum psychological reactions, whilst others may develop severe emotional disorders, such as: post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, alcohol and/or drug addiction, self-destructive conducts, conduct disorders (e.g. stealing) dysfunctions in

perceiving his/her identity, relationship difficulties and lack of trust in adults, alterations in relation to their bodily image, incorrect perception of his/her own sexuality, sexualized conducts, flawed perceptions of labor and childhood.

When the abandoned scavenging children, those who are homeless come together, they develop a companionship system, which replaces the family as source of emotional and economic support. The group offers protection, support, friendship and solidarity. Its members generally show strong loyalty to each other. These neglected scavenging children who are treated as dirty and unwelcome are often condemned by the indifference or hostility of others; they struggle to support themselves and have low self-esteem as a result of their negative experience Le Roux et al., 1998. Scavenging children also experience neglect, abuse, while they are out of scavenging children's group. Drug addiction and various medical problems are also common in scavenging children's group (Le Roux et al., 1998). Suharto and Thamrin (2007) also indicated that generally, people tend to perceive that children in difficult situations (CDS) like prostitutes, street children and scavenging children are among the bad member of society. They are often referred to as having only evil characteristics and hence have no potentials for development. Nevertheless, the above stereotypes are not always the case. It was found that CDS have to some extent 'positive' characters such courage, creativity and independence compared to other children. Solidarity is also high among CDS. However, due to their low socio-economic background and poor environments, some CDS show such unconstructive behavior as pessimistic and low self-confidence.

2.7 Situation of scavenging children in Addis Ababa

Children who are engaged in waste picking or scavenging, in waste sorting for recycling purposes, etc. for the sake of their own and families' survival could easily be affected by the hazardous nature of the work. The ILO convention No.182 of 1999 defines hazardous work "any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on child's safety, health (physical or mental) and moral development (ILO, 2004). According to the base line study result of ILO (2008) children working in solid waste management sector in Addis Ababa the study shows the risk of urban wastes to affect the living and working environment unless it is properly managed and disposed. Municipal wastes have materials that can be salvaged or recycled. Many children in the informal sector are engaged in solid waste collection, scavenging and picking salvageable materials without paying attention to the consequences of hazardous wastes. Waste generation and its management is extremely complex and challenging. The most serious challenge, among others, is the social facet of waste picking by underage children engaged either on their own will or persuaded by their families or discharging their responsibility in the case of child-headed households or employed by adults. The report added that these children are found picking salvageable or recyclable materials in the dumpsite as well as waste containers placed in the different corners of the study area and in open spaces where waste is promiscuously dumped. These wastes contain toxic chemicals and hazardous smell, which can cause fatal incidences to those who are seeking out a living from the sale of these materials. Some of

the respondent children engaged in washing and cleaning collected materials to make them ready for sale responded that they work in environment that has obnoxious and hazardous smell, extreme temperatures/humidity, toxic chemicals and risk of contracting communicable disease (ILO, 2008).

Deribe (2006) found that children scavenging in the dump site have lots of ups and downs. The amount of recyclable waste collected and the number of children in the dump site collecting wastes are not proportional. So the chance of getting enough income to maintain life at a minimal level is rare. In addition to this, the small and young scavengers are mistreated by gang scavengers and forced to serve them. This is in addition a burden for young scavengers in their struggle for survival. Poor waste management is one of the external factors that exposed the children to such risky and miserable life.

2.8 Social Relationships of Scavenging Children

Children working on the dumpsite in order to supplement family income and who return home regularly are loyal and have a positive relationship with family members when compared with permanent children of streets. Many scavenging children have unfavorable family histories. They often come from families of the lower income group (Le Roux et al., 1998). Ridge (2009) stated that childhood is a vital time for the formation of self and social identities and it is also an intense and socially demanding time. Children who experience economic and social difficulties are striving, like their peers, to be included in the social world of childhood. However, unlike their peers they are faced on a daily basis with considerable social challenges which are exacerbated by the

economic and social constraints that structure and inform their lives. A key area of concern for children is the effect that their difficult circumstance can have on their friendships and other social relationships. Children and young people attach particular importance to sustaining good friendships and being part of the social groups to which they aspire. These impacts heavily on children's friendships and social relationships and generate significant anxiety, unhappiness and social insecurity for children. Friendships were described by children as protective and supportive; friends were fun, trustworthy, and loyal. Good friendship also conferred social security and social connection. The key social relationships in this study tended to be small scale, interpersonal networks based on family and friends, whereas in general children had limited engagement with formal community networks and associations. When friendships are working well they clearly have a protective effect, a critical advantage for children already disadvantaged on other social and economic dimensions.

Chapter Three

3. Methodology

The study is qualitative and descriptive in its nature and in the following section the research methods that were used in the study are described.

3.1 Study Area

This study was conducted in a site called 'Koshe' in Kolfe Keranio sub city, kebele 02/03, in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. 'Koshe' is an open waste dumpsite where most of the garbage of the City has been dumped for over many years since 1968 as stated in Kuma (2004). Koshe is found in the middle of residential quarters where the village encircled the waste dumping site and people live around it at short distances. The presence of Alert Hospital in the surrounding had drawn a number of leprosy survivors to the area. The area is also known typically as residence for leprosy survivors and family members.

3.2 Data Sources and Sampling

Data for the research was secured from various sources. To this effect, the following sources of data were included in data collection.

A. Children Scavengers

This study took a central focus on scavenging children who were involved in scavenging recyclable materials from dumped waste for their living. With regard to the selection of research participants, availability sampling technique was employed and 30 scavenging children were selected.

B. Families of the Target Children and Idir leaders

After 30 scavenging children were selected, 7(seven) volunteer families of scavenging children and 6(six) idir leaders were contacted with the help of the children themselves and Alem Children Support Organization (ACSO). With regard to the selection of all participants of the study, a total of 43(forty three) participants were interviewed for this study. These included 30 scavenging children, 7 family members of scavenging children and 6 idir leaders.

3.3 Tools and Techniques

To obtain reliable and objective data for this research, data was collected with both open-ended and closed-ended interviews schedules and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) guidelines.

3.4 Data Organization and Analysis

The data collected was organized in line with the objective of the research. In this process both quantitative primarily descriptive statistics and a qualitative analytical procedure were used. The data that was gathered through FGD and interviews was presented around the central themes of the research as qualitative analytical units.

3.5 Instrument Development

A data collection open-ended and close-ended interview schedule, FGD interview guidelines for parents of scavenging children and *Birhan Abunargawi Andenet Meredajae idir leaders* were developed by the researcher.

Chapter Four

4. Finding and Analysis

This chapter presents the major findings of the study. First the demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented, followed by a description of the major identified push and pull factors for their engagement in scavenging. Subsequently, the natures of respondent's relationships are described as well as their perceived treatment by others in their community. Finally, the reported health and safety problems by respondents due to their engagement in scavenging and their psychological status are described.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section describes the age, sex, years of engagement in scavenging, place of living, place of birth, family situation, living conditions and the educational status of the respondents as well as the health status of their parents. Some implications are derived from the findings and comparisons are made with findings from other studies.

Table 1: Age, Sex and Years of Engagement in Scavenging

Age	Years of engagement in scavenging				Number of children
	10-12 years	5-9 years	1-4 years	<1 years	
15		2	4		6
16	6	1	4		11
17	2	5	3		10
18	1	1	1		3
<i>Sub total</i>	9	9	12		30
Sex					
Male	7	5	5		17
Female	2	4	7		13
<i>Sub total</i>	9	9	12		30

Age of the Participants

Table 1 above shows that the majority (21) of the scavenging children included in the study were between the age of 16 and 17. The youngest respondents were 15 years old and the oldest respondents were 18 years old.

Years of Engagement in Scavenging

Table 1 above shows from the 30 children involved in the study, 9 started scavenging 5-9 years ago, 9 started 10-12 years ago and 12 started before 1-4 years. When comparing the ages of the children with their years of engagement in scavenging, the results show that the majority (18) of the children started the work below the age of 13. Some respondents became involved in scavenging at a very young age: some respondents were 6 years or younger when they started the work. It can be assumed that at this early age children are hardly aware of the benefits and dangers of scavenging and that they were rather simply accompanying their mothers or guardians since there was no one to care for them at home. This assumption is supported by my observations during my visit to the dumpsite.

I saw 'a mother caring her little child while scavenging, some crying children and some other children playing at the corner of the waste dumpsite while waiting until their mothers came back from scavenging.' This finding implies that the onset of scavenging as a life style comes very early among the study population before they are physically and emotionally mature. The ILO Baseline Survey (2008) also found that children 3-5 years old were accompanying their

mothers who were scavenging on the dumpsite. The ILO report states that scavenging children are unprotected by their families or guardians.

Sex

Out of the 30 participants 13 were females and 17 were males. When comparing the sex of the participants with their years of engagement in scavenging it can be concluded that the male participants started the work earlier than the female participants. Of the female children, 7 started scavenging 1-4 years ago, 4 started 5-9 years ago and 2 started 10-12 years ago. Regarding the male children, 7 started scavenging before 10-12 years, 5 started before 5-9 years and 5 started scavenging 1-4 years ago. An ILO (2004) study of scavenging children on a dumpsite in Tanzania found similar results for the engagement of boys and girls. Although boys dominated the dumpsite in Tanzania, scavenging girls were also found to be present.

Place of Living

All of the 30 participants of the study were living near the Koshe dumpsite in Kolfe Keranio sub city, kebele 02/03. In support of this finding ILO (2004) also indicates that most scavenging children are dwellers of the community next to the dumpsite.

Table 2: Place of Birth, Family Situation and Living Arrangement of the participants

Place of birth	Family situation	Living arrangement of the child						Total
		with both parent	with mother	with father	With Siblings	Alone	with relatives	
Addis Ababa	Parents divorced		1					1
	One parent deceased		9	1		1	2	13
	Both parents deceased					2		2
	Both parents alive and living together	5						5
	<i>Sub total</i>	5	10	1		3	2	21
Outside Addis Ababa	Parents divorced							
	One parents deceased		4			1		5
	Both parents deceased					1	1	2
	Both parents alive and living	1					1	2
	<i>Sub total</i>	1	4			2	2	9

Place of Birth

As indicated above in table 2, the majority (21) of the participants of the study were born in Addis Ababa. The rest of the participants (9) migrated from elsewhere to live with their relatives in Addis Ababa after one of their parents passed. Although the majority of the participants of this study are born in Addis Ababa, I observed a significant number of migrants scavenging on the 'Koshe' dumpsite and living nearby during my visit to the area.

Family Situation

A relatively large number of the participants, 18 out of 30 in and outside of Addis Ababa, have lost one parent. In addition, 4 participants have lost both parents. Only one participant's parents were divorced. The parents of a minority of the participants (7) are both alive and living together. These results indicate that the majority of the participants have an unstable family background. In support of this finding Medina (1997) states that a large number of scavenging children on waste dumpsites are from parents dying of HIV/AIDS and other diseases which made them vulnerable due to a lack of security and protection particularly in developing countries.

Current Living Conditions of the Respondents

Of the 30 participants, only 6 were living with both parents. Half of the participants (15) were living with one parent, which was almost always the mother. Four (4) participants were living with relatives and five (5) participants were living alone. These findings indicate that a large proportion of the respondents are living in a situation which is not the usual way of life in the family context. Medina (1997) also found that most scavenging children become orphaned or vulnerable due to an unstable home environment either as a result of death or chronic illness like HIV/AIDS and were therefore often living with their grandmothers or guardians.

Table 3: Health Problems of the Respondents' Parents

No	Health problems of scavenging children parents	Number of respondent
1	Leprosy	13
2	Blindness	5
3	Physical disability	2
4	HIV/AIDS	1
5	Elephantiasis	1
	Total	22

Health Problems of the Respondents' Parents

Table 3 above presents the types of health problems the respondent parents suffers and number of respondents. A large proportion of the participants (22 out of 30) have parents suffering from serious health problems. In particular leprosy is frequent: 13 of the respondents' parents were affected by this disease. In addition, 5 of the respondents' parents were blind, 2 were physically disabled, and 1 suffers from HIV/AIDS and 1 from elephantiasis. The result of this study support the findings of Deribe (2006) which indicated that most children scavenging on the 'Koshe' dumpsite are the descendants of people who are affected by leprosy as well as wounded and displaced soldiers who have been living in and around their former military recovery center.

Education Status of the Respondents

The majority of the respondents (24) dropped out of school, while a minority (6) were attending school but facing a number of challenges. The reasons respondents provided for dropping out of school are presented in table 4 below.

Table 4: Reasons for Dropping Out of School

Reasons for dropping out	Frequency of responses	%
Economic problems at home	12	32.4
Inability to pay for educational material and school uniform	6	16.2
Death of one or two parents	8	21.6
To care for younger siblings	2	5.4
To contribute to the family income	1	2.7
Difficulty to handle Excessive household chores	2	5.4
Difficulty of combining school and work requirement	2	5.4
Preference of money to school	2	5.4
Unwillingness of family to send child to school	2	5.4
Total	37	100

**the respondents responded more than one response.*

The reason respondents most often (32.4%) provided for no longer attending school are economic problems of their household. Other reasons which were often given were the death of one or two parents (21.6%) and a lack of support for school facilities (16.2%). The reasons respondents provided for dropping out of school can be grouped under three broad categories: economic problems, unstable family background and lack of personal commitment. Although there is a government school available in the area, most of the participants in the study miss out on schooling which severely decreases their chance to break out

of the cycle of poverty. The results of this study confirm the findings of many other studies, amongst others the study from Byden & Meyers (1998), which indicate that working children have lower school enrollment, poor attendance and lower completing rates than non working children. Even after being enrolled in school, working children tend to lag behind that of their nonworking peers.

4.2. Push and Pull Factors of Scavenging.

Engagements of children in scavenging work are usually caused by interplay of push and pull factors. This section describes the main push and pull factors that were identified based on the interviews with 30 scavenging children and the Focus Group Discussions held with their parents and Idir leaders. The identified push factors are economic problems, peer pressure, unstable home environment and the presence of the dumpsite around the living area of the children.

4.2.1 Economic Problems

This study pointed out economic problems as among the greatest push factors forcing children to go out of home and look for any alternative in which they could earn income to fulfill their basic needs like food, clothing, and payment for rented house, school uniform and other school expenses. All of the participants were from desperate families which couldn't afford all of the needs of their children. Therefore, these children are expected to cover all of their expenses like their daily meal and clothing. Furthermore, they were expected to contribute their parts in generating income for their destitute parents. To

explain this one of the participants of the study stated his situation before he started scavenging as follows:

My mother and father died when I was 10 years old and my aunt brought me from Gonder to Addis to educate and take care of me. She was selling 'Areki' in her local alcohol house. Due to an unknown illness she ended up in bed for years and we had to live on her husband's income. Because of her illness she couldn't take care of me and her husband overlooked all of my needs. One day I was seriously starved and friends of mine from the neighborhood invited me to join them to get some food and money from 'Koshe'. That day I have eaten food they called 'Sheraton'. Since then and for about four years now, I am scavenging in the waste dump site in order to fulfill my needs and the needs of my aunt including home expenses.

Moreover some of the participants of this study were the breadwinners of the household. Therefore to insure the survival of the younger siblings and their destitute parents they were obliged to work for long hours in a day in order to raise the income of the house hold. Regarding the question these participant were asked what they do by the money they get through scavenging. They responded that all of the money they got through scavenging went to fulfill the needs of the household like payment for the rented house, food, "equb", "idir", clothing, medication, school fee and materials.

The results of FGD with parents of the participants of the study and "idir" leaders supported the result generated from the output of the interview. The discussion held with the parents of these children revealed the fact that the

most pressing factor for the involvement of these children to the life of scavenging are economic problems. One of the discussant reflected her experience as follows:

The main reasons for the involvement of my children in scavenging were economic problems. When my husband died I was in a bed. Due to illness I had nothing to feed my children. It was at this time that my child started scavenging and nourished her younger siblings and paid for my medical expenses.

The other parents of scavenging children also stated her experience as follows:

Our family was not able to survive only with the money I brought home by begging. Hence my child started scavenging to share the burden of the income problem in our house.

The result gained from discussion held with the families of scavenging children also supports that economic problems were the push factors for the involvement of these children to the life of scavenging.

The FGD data collected from “idir” leaders and members also supported the result obtained from discussion with scavenging children and their parents. The “idir” members indicated that most of the community members around the dumpsite live in poverty so that for the majority of the community their livelihood largely depended on begging and scavenging. Moreover, most of the participants of the discussion stated that for most of scavenging children at least one of their parents were scavengers so that when theses children grew

up they followed their parents' footsteps and started scavenging in order to play their parts of raising the family income.

4.2.2 Peer Pressure and the Presence of Dump Site in the Village

Peer pressure and the presence of waste dump site in the locality were found to be another factor identified as a reason for the involvement of children in scavenging. Not excluding the other potential push factors few participants of the study stated that they were involved in scavenging work on the request of their friends to join them and in order to fulfill their needs. Most of scavenging children had at least one or more considerable factor that pushed them to follow the pressure of their peers. Disagreement with family members, unstable home environment, economic problem, shortage of food at home and observing friends with better cloth and money were pointed out as the push factors that aggravated these children to follow their friends' request. In illustrating this one of the participants of the study explained her experience as follows:

After the death of my father and mother I was living with my grandmother and uncle. My uncle was a drunkard. So we frequently quarreled and disagreed on a number of things at home. One day I asked them to give me money for school registration and they were not willing to pay for my school. Due to this reason I left home, dropped out of school and started living with my friends. My friend worked as a scavenger before she began to sell the local drinks 'areki and tela' around the area of Zenebework. One day during my stay with her she told me that I can make a good amount of money by collecting recyclable materials from the waste dumping site and that I should not be entirely dependent on her for all of my needs. I accepted her suggestion and

started picking wastes. Now it has been three years since I started scavenging in the waste dumping site.

The FGD held with parents of scavenging children indicated that not all children scavenging in the waste dump site were from poorest families in the area. Some children were from better families relative to the other communities in the area but were found to be scavenging in the waste dump site in order to get pocket money without the knowledge of their parents and due to the influence of scavenging children from the poorest families. Furthermore, the FGD participants also indicated that poor children were not scavenging because they were pressured by their peers rather they were scavenging because it was their only means of income for their livelihood.

The FGD data collected from “idir” leaders and members indicated that some children were scavenging in the dump site due to peer pressure without the knowhow of their parents. The participants indicated that these children were scavenging in the dumpsites hiding themselves from peoples they know. They stated that this kind of situation happens due to lack of follow up on the whereabouts’ of the children from the parents’ side. According to the discussants after these children familiarized themselves with the money they get from the dumpsite they become unwilling to obey the order of their parents to stop the practice even if they were known to be involved in scavenging. That is why most of the parents of non scavenging children’s were unwilling to let their children play with scavenging children.

Among the other factor which aggravated the involvement of children in scavenging was the presence of waste dump site around the study area. The study result indicated the presence of waste dump site in the area and the rapid urbanization of the City that increased the amount of waste dumped year after year indirectly increased the income of scavenging children and pulls a number of children to 'Koshe'. To explain this one of the study subjects stated his experience as follows:

Most often when I was in class my mind is obsessed with the money I get from the dumpsite in our village so that I couldn't learn properly, thinking about the money I could get from the dumpsite.

All of the participants of this study reported that the presence of the dumpsite around their surrounding and the benefit they get from the dumpsite exacerbated their engagement to the life of scavenging in a number of ways. The availability of waste dump site affected the involvement of these children in a number of ways. According to the study result some kind of physical illness which blocks participation in other working situations , relative freedom of work, earning more amount of money, less requirement of effort than other labor works, accommodation of daily expenses of the family, less requirement of physical strength than other daily labor, nearness of the dump site to the residence, failure to succeed in other work opportunities, absence of work time schedule, daily earning of income, lack of exposure to other work and free access of the dump site to everyone were the pull factors. The result above indicated how the presence of the waste dump site influenced these

children to engage and stay in scavenging business, blocking them from other works. To explain this point one of the participant stated her experience as follows:

Because one of my hands is not working properly due to swelling I can't pull heavy loads and therefore no one wants to hire me for any daily labor work. Furthermore the money I get from 'Koshe' is greater than from any other daily labor. Moreover the absence of any supervisor that controls working hours encouraged me to stay in this work.

The presence of the waste dump site around their locality was supported by the focus group discussion with the parent of scavenging children as one of the pull factors for the involvement of their children in scavenging. In explaining this situation one of the parents of these children as follows:

Our economic problem is the major push factor. Had it not been for this waste dumping site we don't know how we could get money for our survival.

The other parent of scavenging children in the discussion also stated as follows:

In our community there are no street children because of the availability of the dumpsite 'Koshe' in our surroundings. It generates sufficient income for these children's livelihood.

The above statement clearly indicated that the presence of waste dump site around the study area has increased the practice of scavenging in the locality since it was considered as the only source of income.

The data collected from FGD with “idir” leaders also indicated that the presence of waste dumping site was not the pull factor only for the involvement of these children in to the work of scavenging, it was also an aggravating factor which increased the practice of scavenging across the community and even posing itself as potential factor for the school dropout of scavenging children.

4.2.3 Home Environment

In this study unstable home environment was also found to be among the major factors that pushed children in to scavenging in the waste dump site. All of the participants of the study were from the families with one or more kind of problems associated with history of disruption. Some of the problems of scavenging children associated with family disruption indicated by the participants of this study were death of one or both of their parents, absence of guardians due to parents’ death, parents illness due to leprosy, blindness, disability, HIV/AIDS and elephantiasis, responsibility to take care of younger siblings, large number of siblings, disagreement with step father or mother, family separation , divorce, alcoholism of parents, being the child of scavenging family and disagreement with guardians or their siblings. To illustrate this situation one of the participant’s of the study stated his experience as follows:

My father was a good person before my mother’s death. My mother was selling the local drinks ‘areki and tela’ before her death. After her death our father started to ignore me and my younger brother even though our neighbors frequently told him to take care of us. Furthermore he started to come home drunk late at night. One day he brought a woman home,

our stepmother, and told us to obey whatever she requested. Since then we frequently quarreled with her and started to go to the dumpsite with our neighbors, looking for food and other materials to sell to get some income to buy food and clothing. Since then I have been scavenging for around four years in Koshe.

The focus group discussion result with the parents of the main subjects of the study shares the same idea on the role of family disruption or unstable home environment as push factors for the involvement of these children to work in scavenging. One of the parents of scavenging children who was affected by leprosy indicated her experience as follows:

'Look at my hands and legs; I am not able to work. I have no income; my only income is through begging. My husband died and I am frequently in bed because of illness. That is why my child goes scavenging with his friends to support me'

The FGD data collected from “idir” leaders also supported the points raised by scavenging children and their parents. All of the participants agreed on the point indicated above like illness of the parents of scavenging children, divorce, alcoholism, death of the guardians and parents to be the push factors for the involvement of these children in scavenging. The “idir” leaders further indicated that some scavenging children in the dump site were children trafficked from elsewhere by illegal traffickers. When these children came from their villages by these traffickers they were promised a good job, however the girls were required to be prostitutes in the local “areki” house by the employer. Finally when these

children were unwilling to continue in this job they turned their face to scavenging.

The above findings clearly indicated the fact that children were forced to scavenging at their early ages on reasons related to economic problems, peer pressure, the presence of the dump site in their locality and unstable home environment. The findings that were gathered from scavenging children, their families as well as “idir” leaders and members were much more similar and supplementary to each other and showed various interrelated factors as to why the children were involved in scavenging.

4.3. Social Experiences of Scavenging Children and Societal Reactions

The following part of this study presents the findings with regard to the relationships of scavenging children with their parents and scavenging and non scavenging peers, how they are perceived by the community and the social reactions they experience.

4.3.1 Social Relationships of Scavenging Children.

Ridge (2009) found that children who are engaged in prostitution, begging, street life and scavenging suffer from problematic social relationships. The finding of this study also indicated that scavenging children experienced difficulties in their social relationships.

Social Relationships of Scavenging Children with their Peers

Scavenging children face a range of hazards and problems in the hostile physical and social environment they are living. Among these problems the bad relationship they have with non scavenging peers is to be pointed out. In this

regard, the participants of the study indicated that they have difficulties in making and maintaining relationships with non scavenging children due to stigma and discrimination which is often seen in the play grounds of the village and schoolyards. They are verbally abused with morally touching insults like 'yekoshegenda' to mean 'waste bin' 'trash', 'vulture'. These children also fear humiliation of non-scavenging peers, public perception as unclean and trash, undermining of other children. Moreover they do not feel easy and equal with other children because of their background, other children negative perception, feeling of inferiority due to their appearance. The participants also indicated that other children do not want to be friends with them because they feel that they would be spoiled if they become friends of them. The study results showed that scavenging children were striving, like their peers, to be included in the social world of childhood. However, unlike their peers they faced considerable social challenges in making and maintaining friendships and other social relationships which were exacerbated by the economic and social constraints they are struggling with. The study found that the friendships of most scavenging children are limited to other scavenging children. The majority of scavenging children indicated that they have difficulties in relating, making and maintaining good relationships with non scavenging children, which created unhappiness and anxiety in their social relationships. The study result clearly identified that scavenging children were suffering from social exclusion due to a number of reasons indicated above. In explaining this experience one of the participants of the study pointed out her experience as follows:

One day one of my friends from school came to our home before I changed the dirty clothes I wear in the dumpsite and that day she found out that I am scavenging. Since then she told other friends of mine that I am scavenging. Because of this my friends left me alone and told me that they don't want to be with me. However until now I have tried very much to be closer with them.

To further explain the situation these scavenging children have with their peers the other participant of the study explained his experience in this way:

Because I don't want to have non scavenging friends I didn't have friends other than scavenging peers. In fact I used to play with other children; however I quit because of their humiliation and discrimination. I also dropped out from school because I could not stand the teasing and insults from other children.

Unlike non scavenging peers the study result showed the existence of strong intra group social bond and solidarity within the scavenging children which fill the gap of the emotional and social network they missed from other peers who were not involved in scavenging. This friendship of scavenging children for each other was described by them as protective, supportive, funny, trustworthy and loyal. To explain this one of the study participant stated:

I have a very positive and strong relationship with scavenging peers, be it in the dump site or in the village. The reason why I have such a relationship with them is because we are in the same kind of situation and we understand each other. Moreover, scavenging peers are the ones who are beside me when my problems are becoming worse due to illness

or other reasons. Furthermore we live and work in the same environment which makes us feel connected.

The result of this study indicated that almost all of scavenging children have a positive or good relationship for each other unlike the relationship they have with non scavenging peers. This positive relationship is derived from a number of reasons. Some of the reasons the study identified to this positive relationship are listed as follows: Most of scavenging children were neighbors when they grew up with feeling of solidarity among themselves. The problem and the social exclusion they shared created the spirit of understanding they have and the care they were exchanging when their problems worsened due to illness and accidents facilitated their relationship. Moreover same working environment and the respect they have each other is another reason for their strong relationship. Furthermore the long hours of being together due to neighborhood and work environment created strong relation within themselves. Additionally feeling of safety, absence of discrimination, presence of cooperation against external treats, existence of relative freedom in expressing themselves, as well as absence of feeling of inferiority when working and playing with their scavenging peers strengthened the solidarity and relationship of scavenging children with in their groups.

Social relationship of scavenging children with their family

The results of this study show that the majority of the scavenging children have a warm and loving relationship with their parents in spite of the problems they are facing at household level, like economic problems, illness of parents

and social exclusion from some community groups. To explain this one of the participants stated:

I have a good relationship with my parents and I am happy when I spend my time with them. No matter how bad our problems are, the love and support I receive from my parents help me to be strong and courageous.

Some participants of the study however indicated that they don't have a good relationship with their parents. The reasons they cited for this bad relationship included disagreement when they didn't bring money home and hostile relationship between step mother and neglectful fathers who disregarded their children's wellbeing or neglectful relatives. Some of the study subjects even indicated that they started living alone due to constant disagreement between them and their stepparents and relatives. In illustrating this situation one of the participants of the study stated his experience as follows:

After the death of my mother my father took care of me and my brother but he neglected us. I don't have a good relationship with him hence I am not happy when I spend my time with him at home.

Despite the pressures that economic and social problems exert on family life, mothers were seen as a vital support by children. Most of the children in the study included their mothers as key members when mapping their social networks and indicated that they would talk to their mothers if they had a problem or were worried. These findings indicated that relationships with fathers, stepfathers and stepmothers were not given the same level as relationships with mothers.

4.3.2 Perception and Reaction of the Society towards Scavenging Children

The result of this study indicated that most of scavenging children were perceived and judged negatively by the community. When responding to the question that asked how the community perceived scavenging children, all of them reported that they were considered as courageous and strong children by scavenging adults, whereas the other society especially non scavenging community members often associated them with arrogance, rudeness, and bad-manner. Even some community members considered girls as prostitutes of dumpsite. Scavenging children, especially boys were considered as delinquent, deviant and rude. They were also considered as thieves. Therefore, they were always under spotlight by the community and the police for any crime in the village. Moreover, these children were also perceived by the society as criminal and drug addicts. For this reason they were feared and regarded as dangerous children to the society. The following quotes taken from direct saying of one of the study participant explains this situation:

I am living alone in a rented house after the death of both of my parents with no one to care for me. I am scavenging in the dump site, not out of free will but because I have no one to provide me for my living. I don't have collateral to work as a house maid, which I have tried many times and failed to achieve. My community members, even my non scavenging peers, don't want to be with me. Rather they humiliate and discriminate me. Because I am working in the dump site they believe I am involved in some deviant work like prostitution. I remember that after I was raped I stayed at home for a few days. At that time my friends were visiting me frequently and the owner of the house was not feeling good about them coming to visit me. Then I heard my neighbor saying "prostitution is not

new for her, it is her day to day life". After hearing her saying this I was very much depressed and spent the whole day crying.

Due to negative perception held by the society towards scavenging children most of these children reported that they were treated and judged by the community differentially unlike the children who are not scavenging. The result of this study identified that due to negative perception held by the society scavenging children were marginalized and often a subject of harassment by the authorities ,police and society. In explaining this one participant stated:

The society doesn't respect us (scavenging children) and most often they insult us. Personally I am insulted in every corner of the village when I pass by. Moreover I was also imprisoned many times without any reason because of the mere reason they think that scavenging children are responsible for each crime in the society.

When responding to the question that asked what kind of challenges they faced from the society due to their involvement in scavenging, all of them pointed out a number of reactions that potentially deteriorate their psychological and moral strength for future growth. The reactions of the society towards these scavenging children were revealed in verbal abuse, physical attack, facial reaction and use of power in unlawful way. To illustrate this situation one of the participant of the study stated her experience as follows:

I am living with my family in a rented house and the owner of the house is living in the same compound with us. She doesn't care about us; she is only concerned about her monthly fee. I know she doesn't have a good attitude towards me and my family because she feels that we are the

reason for the dirtiness of the compound. Even though we don't put what we got from the dumpsite everywhere in the compound. I remember one day she started insulting me with a lot of morally touching words which was beyond my patience. That day I cried a lot.

According to the participants the study, verbal abuse was the common way of community negative reaction with insulting and morally touching words like 'Timbe ansa' which means vulture in English, 'gime' to mean rotten body, 'koshe' to mean dirty, 'yekoshe lej' to mean children of garbage. This kind of verbal abuses were the daily reality of these children in play ground with their peers and when they pass by the surrounding of non scavenging society members especially when they are returning home from work. Humiliation, discrimination, stigmatization, bad facial reactions were some of experiences of these children in their daily exposure with their society in different community gathering places. Because most of scavenging children were considered potentially delinquent by the security officers and the society, the study participants indicated that despite any criminal act at least once in their life they experienced assault and imprisonment by the police. To explain this one of the participants of the study stated his experience as follows:

I remember one day when I returned home after working in the dump site for long hours. I and my friends looked unclean with dirty work clothes and we were very tired from the work. At that time the police officers came to me and my friends and asked about someone we don't know whom they suspect from robbery. They threatened to arrest us unless we told them about this person. They became very offended by our

response and started to beat us, after which they finally allowed us to go.

Therefore, they indicated that they hide themselves from police officers fearing that they would be attacked and imprisoned. Fearing the insult and humiliation as well as to avoid negative reaction of the community, some of the study subject indicated that they hide and cover their face from the people they know when they get and return from dumpsite. These findings indicate that scavenging does not only place these children at physical risk or at risk of stigma, it also inadequately socialized them with the wider society.

The focus group discussion held with the families of scavenging children is also in accordance with the above findings regarding the perception and responses of the society towards scavenging children. Some of the focus group participants indicated that the perception held by the community members are different from one another, though most of the society members undermined them. Moreover the participant of the study also indicated that boys were considered as deviant and delinquent like thieves and ‘majerat mechi’ to mean burglars and girls were perceived as deviant children like prostitutes. The discussants confirmed the existence of bad mannered scavenging children in contrast to the children who are good mannered with strong discipline even to the point of being the breadwinners of the household.

The other focus group discussion result held with “idir” leaders confirmed the existence of discrimination, neglect, humiliation and verbal abuse. The idir leaders and members indicated that all this discrimination and abuse by the

community comes as a result of the scavenging community's connection with the waste in the dump site. The discussants indicated that due to scavenging children connection with the waste most of these children groups do not keep their hygiene regularly since the work demands them to stay most of their time in the dump site to earn sufficient money. The discussion also indicated that in spite of these group attempts to keep their personal hygiene the smell of the waste does not easily lost from their body due to long hour contact with the waste. Therefore, most of the communities don't approach scavenging children because they smell bad. In doing this the other community member create in group solidarity with non scavenging community members and alienate the scavenging community groups from their social network. Subsequently, to protect themselves from another attack and verbal abuse scavenging children also walk and act everywhere in a group. These children act in a group when external treats like insult and discrimination came against them. Due to this reason the other community members consider scavenging children as deviant and delinquent. As a result, non-scavenging society members label these children as 'durya', 'majerat mechi' and 'werobela', to mean deviant, burglar and gangster respectively.

4.4 Health and Safety Problems Associated with the Practice of Scavenging

4.4.1 Injury and health problems

This study identified that children scavenging in the dump site experienced various problems such as physical injuries, health problems, sexual harassment and forced use of labor. In the dump site all kinds of wastes including recyclable and non recyclable, organic and non organic, reusable and worthless wastes coming from hotels, industries, households and hospitals were found to be dumped. Among the hazardous wastes, hospital wastes including used dressings, needles, syringes and pharmaceuticals rejects such as drugs and caustic substances and explosives, combustible and decayed materials, remnants of demolished buildings and paintings were found to be dumped. The participants of the study were asked to recall any physical injury they experienced after they engaged in the work of scavenging.

Table 5: Physical Injury Associated with Scavenging and Sex

sex	physical injury				Total responses
	sharp materials cut and injection	chemical injury	car accident	fire burn	
Male	17	1	6	2	26
female	13	1	-	1	15
Total	30	2	6	3	41

**the respondents responded more than one response*

Table 5 above presents the types of injury scavenging children experienced based on their sex. The majority 30(17 Males, 13 females) of the study

participants indicated that they had experienced physical injuries as a result of injection and cut with broken glass, used needles and hospital syringes followed by car accident from waste transporting trucks (6 males), 3(2 male, 1 female) burned with buried fire and 2(1male, 1 female) injured from chemicals respectively. Car accident most of the time occurred when waste pickers crushed together to reach incoming recyclables as trucks back up to unload and others fall under the wheels of the truck as they run to jump on or off of the riding steps. Most of the study subjects indicated that as a result of these physical injuries they had suffered from different kinds of illness and health complications. The major health problems reported that were associated with physical injury by the participant of the study were Tetanus, swelling of hands and legs due to chemical contact, injection with used hospital needles and broken glass and bone fracture due to car accident.

Table 6: Health Problems Associated with Scavenging and Sex

sex	Health problems associated with scavenging							Total responses
	diarrhea	Tuberculosis	Stomach upset	Food poison	Breathing problem	Flue and coughing	Rush or skin irritation	
Male	9	3	11	8	4	6	1	31
female	-	5	1	1	5	9	2	23
Total	9	9	12	9	9	15	3	54

**the respondents responded more than one response*

Table 6 above shows that the majority 15 (9 male, 6 female) participants suffered from flue and coughing, followed by stomach upset 12 (11 male, 1 female), diarrhea 9(all are males), tuberculosis 9(3 male, 5 female), food poison 9(8 male, 1 female), breathing problem 9(4 male, 5 female), rash or skin irritation 3(1 male, 3 female). According to the reflection of the participants these were the major and frequently occurring health complication these children were suffering from. Most of the subjects of the study reported a number of health problems they were suffering from, either due to their involvement in the work of scavenging, physical injury, long hour contact with wastes in the dumping site or the scavenged unhygienic and poisoned food they ate. Most of the food item they used for consumption was left over food like cakes and other solid foods from luxuries hotels like Sheraton and Hilton, canned food opened and used from airports and supermarkets.

4.4.2 Sexual Assaults and Harassment

Problems of scavenging children are complicated and diversified ranging from economic problems to health problems including social exclusions and harassment. Accordingly to the findings of this study the prevalence of sexual abuse on scavenging children by gang scavengers in the dump site is high. Among the participants of this study some girls reported that either they were raped or faced attempted rape. Girls were highly vulnerable and easy sexual targets unless they had someone either from their family members or a neighbor who had a potential to protect them from attack. The participants of the study further indicated that scavenging gangs first negotiated with that girl

in peace to make them their girl friend. If the girls refused to obey their request the gangs forced them to handover all items they collected and raped them. In doing so they negotiated with the girls. If still the girls refused to be obedient for the sexual request by the gangs they had one option. This was either to leave the dumpsite or become their girl friends. They also indicated the existence of a number of girls who were raped and become pregnant and died when they tried to abort. One participant indicated that she became victim of HIV/AIDS as a result of rape in the dumpsite. The following quotation illustrates the depth of sexual abuse directed to scavenging children:

After the death of my parents I could not agree with my guardians and therefore I left home and started living alone. I support my living with the money I got from scavenging. To raise my daily income I often wake up in the morning and start working on the dump site, but one unfortunate morning when I was walking alone to the dump site a scavenging gang followed and raped me in group. I don't remember what happened to me, when I woke up I found myself in a hospital bed. As a result of this I became a victim of HIV/AIDS.

Another participant of the study stated her experience of rape as follows:

Koshe is not a good place, especially for girls because beyond the hazard due to the wastes, it is the place where most often girls who have no one to protect them are raped and harassed. I am also a victim of rape. The guy who raped me asked me previously to be his girlfriend but I refused him. Since then he had been repeatedly warning me. Finally after looking that I was alone and with the help of his friends he raped me.

4.4.3 Forced use of Labor

In spite of other problems scavenging children experience like physical injuries, health problems and sexual abuse presented above. The participant of this study reported the existence of forced labor in the waste dump site by gang scavengers. According to the data obtained from the participant of the study scavenging children are forced to work or serve for scavenging gangs unless and otherwise they are forced to leave the dump site or beaten brutally and forced to handover all items they collected for the gang scavengers in the dump site especially if they have no one to protect them. One of the study participants explained his experience as follows:

Before I became very connected with the other children scavenging on dump site I had no one to protect me from gangster attacks, especially in the first days of my life in the dump site. I was forced to collect and hand over all items I scavenged to dump site gangsters. I was brutally beaten by gangsters due to my refusal to hand over all items I scavenged.

Data obtained from focus group discussion with the parents of scavenging children supported the results obtained from interviewed children. Parents of scavenging children stated that their children were often injured with broken glass, used needles from hospital wastes and suffered from health complications like tuberculosis, stomach upset and diarrhea. Moreover, beside this complication the parents of these children also indicated that the problems

of girls are much more difficult than boys because they are easy sexual targets by dump site scavenging gangs. The discussants confirmed that they know rape cases and pregnant girls. The discussants also confirmed some girls quite scavenging due to their unwillingness for sexual intercourse with dumpsite gangs.

4.5. Psychological Status of Scavenging Children

This part of the study presents the results regarding the psychological status of scavenging children, in particular their perceived future orientation and behavioral changes.

4.5.1 Characteristics of Scavenging Children

As described in the section on social experiences, most scavenging children were perceived by the society as delinquent and deviant children. During the interviews children were asked if their behavior changed, be it positive or negative, after they got engaged in scavenging. In response to this question all participants of the study indicated that they perceived changes in their behavior after they got involved in scavenging. Some of the study subjects indicated or perceived their social behavior as being rude and fearless towards anyone, including authorities. In addition, some of the subjects indicated that they became highly hot-tempered, aggressive and fighters. In explaining this situation one of the study participants stated her experience as follows:

I never thought that I would become a scavenger when I came to Addis. My dream was to complete my education. But when I found myself in the waste dumpsite in addition to the hardship and tediousness of the work situation I become very aggressive and hot-tempered, so that if someone

mistreated me I will insult him. I don't hesitate to fight even if it is necessary.

Some of the subjects also indicated that their social behavior was filled with sorrow, withdrawal, inferiority feeling and crying. One of the study participants stated her experience as follows:

When I come back from scavenging on the dumpsite I don't want to interact with anyone because I want to spend my spare time alone. I withdraw myself from other peers, but I was not such a person before I started with this work. If other people mistreat me I respond by crying and feeling helpless.

Moreover, some of (5 male) participants indicated that they became addicted to alcohol, chewing chat and cigarettes. In explaining this situation one respondent explained his experience as follows:

After I became involved in scavenging I became addicted to cigarettes, alcohol and chat (Kat). Moreover I became very aggressive and hot-tempered.

As reasons for their change in behavior the majority of study participants mentioned the negative societal reactions on their involvement in scavenging, the demands and tediousness of the work, the disruption from attainment of their goals (like education) and unfulfilled needs. The long working hours and working circumstances that caused these children to develop and show these behaviors as coping strategy in the dump site and across all social relationship.

In explaining this one respondent stated his experience as follows:

Because the work is very hard and tough I learned to be aggressive and rude and to be always ready to fight. In this way I became very aggressive and I continued to show this behavior across all situations.

The results indicated that aggression, hot-temperedness and fighting are characters which scavenging children develop in the dump site in order to cope with the situation and be able to earn an income.

4.5.2 Future Orientation of Scavenging Children

The results of the study indicate that almost all participants of the study are optimistic about their future regardless of their economic and social difficulties. All participants of the study were positive about their personal prospects, especially regarding their education, family affairs and sense of community. All of the subjects indicated that their future goal is to stop scavenging and continue their education and to lead a better life. In explaining this one of the subjects of the study stated his aspiration as follows:

I want to quit scavenging work and to finish my education. My wish is to become a journalist because I am good student. I think I will have a better future due to my education.

Although all participants of the study indicated that they want to continue their education, most of the participants would like to continue their education in the field of skill training rather than school based formal education. Most participants believed that skill training is essential for improving their future. The majority of boys would like to continue their education in the field of

driving and auto mechanics. One participant of the study stated his aspirations as follows:

Forgetting all the difficulties I am currently facing and have been struggling with, I hope to have a better future. Now I am thinking not to waste time. I want to have a driving license and become a driver in order to help my parents and change my situation.

Scavenging girls are mainly interested in continuing their education in the field of catering and hairdressing. One of the subjects of the study explained her interest as follows:

Because I am skilled in hairdressing, I could continue and further this skill through trainings. I think this will change the situation of my parents and me so that I will have a better future.

Besides skill training, participants also believed that their future could be improved by engaging in small scale business and migrating to Arab countries. In explaining this one of the participants of the study stated her aspiration as follows:

I want to start my own business quitting this scavenging work which devastated my life for several years and if things get alright I want also to go to Beirut and Saudi Arabia to change my parents and my own life.

During the interviews the children expressed a great sense of community. Almost all participants stated that if things were going better for them they

have a deep interest in helping their parents and the poor who are in the same situation like them. In explaining one participant stated her desire as follows:

I am always dreaming to have a better future than my current situation. I believe that I will have a good future if I am involved in small business activities and any other kind of work. My intention is to change myself and my parents, and moreover to help children who are living in the same situations like me.

Most of the participants of the study indicated that they need some kind of support from the government and/or other bodies. The types of support children like to receive include opportunities to continue their education, free health care and financial support to run small business.

Chapter Five

5. Discussion of the Major Findings

The study finding indicated that the majority of scavenging children were found to be engaged in scavenging in their early age for employment. They are also from parents with unstable background. Most of scavenging children were found to be orphans. Parents of the majority of these children experience serious health problems. Moreover the majority of scavenging children were found to be school dropouts. In sharing the same idea with this finding Medina (1997) concluded that a large number of scavenging children on waste dumpsites are from parents dying of HIV/AIDS and other diseases which made them vulnerable due to lack of security and protection particularly in developing countries. He also stated these children become orphans as a result of death either due to HIV/AIDS or other serious illness. Boyden and Meyers (1998) also confirmed that child laborers have lower school enrollment and poor attendance and lower completing rates.

Engagements of children in scavenging work is usually caused by interplay of push and pull factors. The finding of this study identified economic problems, unstable family environment, peer pressure and the presence of the dump site around the village as major reason for the engagement of these children in scavenging. The majority of participants indicated economic problem as the greatest push factor for their involvement in scavenging. In supporting this finding, Le Roux, etal (1998) also concluded that that poverty or family needs for additional income, parents' inability to provide sufficient income for the

survival of the family are some of the economic problem that pushed children to the life of scavenging. The study result indicated the presence of waste dump site in the area and the rapid urbanization of the City that increased the amount of waste dumped year after year which indirectly increase the income of scavenging children and pulls a number of children to the dumpsite. Sharing the same idea with this finding Deibe (2006) concluded that rapid urbanization in addition to the expanded use of paper, plastic, glass packaging in food and other consumer products and parallel growth of industries that recycle these materials which directly increase income earned from the dumpsite had led a number of children around the dump site to the life of garbage picking full or part time. All of the participants of the study were from unstable family with one or more problems associated with history of disruption. In supporting this finding Soda (1996) indicated that family disruption in the form of death, abandonment, separation, and divorce, has shrunk family size, often resulting in poor, single parenthood and often in mother headed households. This leaves children vulnerable and with the general absence of community and government support, they have few options in times of crisis. One option is becoming scavenger on streets and waste dumpsites, scavenging for food, clothing and recyclable materials.

The study finding indicated that scavenging children had difficulties in relating, making and maintaining good relationships with non scavenging children. The main factors for negative relationship these children had with non scavenging peers were stigma, discrimination, verbal abuse, and labeling

of other children as delinquent, thieves and bad mannered children. These children were also found to be unhappy and anxious in their social relationship. This result shares the conclusion of Ridge (2009) who stated that children in difficult circumstances, like scavenging children, attach particular importance to sustaining good friendships and being part of the social groups, however inability to attain this impacts heavily on children's friendships and social relationships which generates significant anxiety, unhappiness and social insecurity for children. Unlike the relationship with their non scavenging peers, the majority of scavenging children have positive intra group social bond and solidarity with their parents and scavenging peers which fill the gap of emotional and social network they missed from others.

The study finding indicated all (30) of scavenging children were perceived and judged negatively by the community. They were labeled as dirty, delinquent, prostitute and criminals. Due to this labeling these children suffered from marginalization, humiliation, stigmatization, verbal abuse, physical attack, assault and imprisonment by authorities, police and society. In this regard Suharto and Thamrin (2007) indicated that generally, people tend to perceive that Children in Difficult Situations (CDS) are among the bad members of society. They are often referred to as having only evil characteristics and hence have no potential for development. In support of this result Medina (2000) stated that human scavengers constitute disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of the population. Scavengers face multiple hazards and problems. Due to their daily contact with garbage, scavengers are usually associated with

dirt, disease, squalor, and perceived as a nuisance, a symbol of backwardness, and even as criminals. They survive in a hostile physical and social environment.

Scavenging children suffered many barriers resulting from their working situation, appearance, the stigma of their occupation and their low status in society. Moreover they faced problems of physical injuries, health problems, sexual assault and harassment as well as forced labor. The majority of the study subjects indicated that they had experienced physical injuries as a result of broken glass, buried fire, used needles, injuries from chemicals and car accident from waste transporting trucks. As a result of these physical injuries these children suffered from different kinds of illness and health complications. Sharing the same idea with this finding Tadesse (2007) concluded that in Addis Ababa all aspects of the solid waste management cycle are associated with multiple Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) risks, mostly beyond acceptable levels. Scavengers perform their tasks under “accidents/diseases waiting to happen” conditions. For them, accidents and illnesses are foregone conclusions, and it is only a matter of time before one of the many potential accidents and illnesses attack them.

The prevalence of sexual abuse on scavenging children by gang scavengers in the dump site is high. The finding of the study indicated that 5 girls were either raped or faced attempted rape. Medina (2000) stated that scavenging communities as a result of their marginalization are often a subject of

harassment by the society and female scavengers in particular are easy sexual targets even within scavenging community.

Children scavenging in the dump site were forced to serve for the gangsters, beaten brutally and forced to hand over all items they collected. Deribe (2006) stated that normally the dump site is open for everyone but no one is allowed to scavenge on the dumpsite without the permission of the gang scavengers and everyone in the dump site should be obedient and serve the gangs unless they are forced to leave the dumpsite and handover all items they collected to gang scavengers.

Regarding the psychological status of these children the study finding indicated that scavenging children experienced the feeling of rejection, inferiority and insecurity. ILO (2007) indicated that, children subjected to negative reactions from other people, such as exclusion, stigmatization and labeling like “the beggar”, “prostitute” and ‘the scavenger’ combining with the lack of a stable environment and the negative reactions of others create a distorted perception of the self which leads to low self-esteem.

Children scavengers were found to be optimistic about their future prospects for their education, family affairs and sense of community. I think this could be a good opportunity for withdrawal, rehabilitation and development of these children to their prospects. The study finding also identified that these children were rude, fearless, hot-tampered, as well as aggressive and fighters, they also developed a feeling of withdrawal, crying and grief. The study identified that

these characters which scavenging children developed in the dumpsite were a coping strategy to survive in these situations and to earn more income.

This study indicated that some of scavenging children particularly boys were found to be addicts of chat (kat), alcohol and cigarettes. Le Roux (1998) stated that drug addiction and various medical problems are common for scavenging children.

The result of this study identified a number of contradictions between the law of the country and the situation of these children who are working on the waste dump site. According to this study the majority of scavenging children who were found to be involved in scavenging were below the age of 18. This is contrary to Ethiopia's labor proclamation and ILO minimum age for work involvement.

One of the guiding principles of UNCRC is the rights of children to life, survival and development. This includes the right to adequate food, shelter, clean water, formal education, primary health care and etc. However the result of this study indicated that the majority of scavenging children are school dropouts, victims of family violence and neglect, suffers from physical injuries, health problems, sexual harassment and forced labor, working in very unhealthy, dangerous and hazardous work situation. Girls were easy sexual targets of rape which expose them to HIV/AIDS, pregnancy and other communicable disease. This indicates that scavenging children working on the waste dump site are denied their

rights of survival and development which is one of the core principles of UNCRC.

The study finding identified that scavenging children were discriminated, treated badly, considered as criminal, marginalized and harassed by the community and police, verbally and emotionally abused, physically attacked, assaulted and imprisoned by the police, labeled as deviant, delinquent and prostitutes. This result indicated that the majority of scavenging children were living in very difficult situation against to the country law, and the UNCRC Article 2 which states the obligation on the ratifying states to protect children from any kind of discrimination based on their background.

This study identified that the majority of scavenging children were psychologically suffering from fear of rejection, discrimination and low self – esteem due their engagement in this hazardous work situation even though the country law prohibits their involvement.

Although the UNCRC, ILO Minimum Age Convention (no.138), Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (no.180), Ethiopian labor proclamation of 1993, and the federal democratic government of Ethiopia constitution article 36 prohibits the involvement of child in the work as it by its nature creates hazard to the health, survival, moral and emotional development of children. This indicates that the problem of scavenging children who are under difficult circumstances is not yet well addressed. Therefore the lives of these children are at absolute risk. This is the denial of the right to live and wellbeing of children.

Chapter Six

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

Children are the assets of any society. The development, protection and education of the younger generation is a developmental issue that concerns every sector of society. The notion that the work of children by its nature or circumstances in which it is undertaken is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children in hazardous and dangerous work situation without receiving adequate protection and education is disinvestment of future human capital formation. Accordingly based on the finding of the study the following conclusions are made:

- ❖ Scavenging children were found to be engaged in scavenging in their early age for employment which was prohibited by the government of Ethiopia. Both sexes were found to be scavenging in the waste dump site. Most of these children live in the community next to waste dumpsite. Except few children most of these scavenging children were born and grew up in Addis Ababa. These children were from parents with unstable background and they were also found to be orphans. These children were found to come from parents with serious health problems. Moreover, they are found to be school dropouts.
- ❖ With regard to the factors associated with the involvement of these children in scavenging, the finding of this study can be seen under four major interrelated factors. The identified push and pull factors of this

study were economic problems, unstable family environment, peer pressure and the presence of the dump site around the village.

- ❖ Children scavengers had difficulties in relating, making and maintaining good relationships with non scavenging children. The main factors for negative relationship these children had with non scavenging peers were stigma, discrimination, verbal abuse, and labeling of other children as delinquent, thieves and bad mannered children.
- ❖ The social relationship scavenging children had for each other, unlike non-scavenging peers was found to be a very strong social bond and solidarity. Some of the reasons for their good relationship could be broadly concluded as a result of proximity when they grew up and work place interaction, understanding and care they have each other, cooperation and relative feeling of freedom.
- ❖ With regard to the relation of these children with their parents this study concluded that they had warm and loving relationship with their parents. However some children were found to have bad relations with their parents mainly due to unfulfilled need, neglect of parents, and disagreement with step mothers. Mothers were found to be a vital support to these children and key members when mapping their social networks. However, fathers and step mothers were not given the same status to these children as mothers do.

- ❖ With regard to perception and reaction of the community towards scavenging children the study found out that scavenging children were perceived and judged negatively by the community. They were labeled as dirty, delinquent, prostitute and criminals. Due to this labeling these children suffered from marginalization, humiliation, stigmatization, verbal abuse, physical attack, assault and imprisonment by authorities, police and society. They were also under spotlight for every crime in the village.
- ❖ Scavenging children suffered many barriers resulting from their appearance, the stigma of their occupation and their low status in society. Moreover they faced problems of physical injuries, health problems, sexual harassment and forced labor. The causes of physical injury and health complications were found to be scavenging with unprotected hands and feet as well as absence of protective equipments while scavenging in this very dangerous place. Moreover scavenging girls were found to be easy sexual targets. Additionally scavenging children in the dumpsite were also found to be forced to serve gang scavengers.
- ❖ Regarding the psychological status of these children the majority of scavenging children were found to have poor self esteem associated with feeling of rejection, inferiority and insecurity. Moreover regarding the future orientation of these children all were found to be optimistic about their future prospects for their education, family affairs and sense of community. Some of scavenging children were found to be addicts of

chat (kat), alcohol and cigarettes. After they were engaged in scavenging, the majority of these children developed rude, fearless, hot-tampered, aggressive and fighting behavior. Some of these children also developed a feeling of withdrawal, crying and grief. The study identified that these characters which scavenging children developed in the dumpsite were a coping strategy to survive in these situations and to earn more income.

- ❖ Even though the constitution of the Federal Democratic Government of Ethiopia, has signed and ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention (no.138), ILO worst forms of child labor (no.182), that prohibit the engagement of these children at their early age in scavenging and has guaranteed the children protection, survival and development at policy level, still scavenging children in Addis Ababa were found to be living and working in a very hazardous and potentially dangerous place which hampers their psychological, social, mental, moral and academic development in contrary to the country legislation.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this study the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations:

- ❖ Day care centre for infants and children should be established around 'Koshe'. This is important for early childhood development to prevent children later becoming laboring children, including scavenging children. The day care assures they are kept away from scavenging in their early years and it is more likely they will stay away when they grow older.
- ❖ Adequate protective measures at policy and grass root levels should be taken in order to block the access of waste dumping site especially for children.
- ❖ The NGOs and governmental organization should undertake programs for empowerment of parents of scavenging children in order to indirectly improve the development of these children.
- ❖ Integrated projects which include access to free education, health, clothing, supplementary food provision, hygiene and sanitation should be designed to address various aspects of the problem.
- ❖ Organize awareness raising sessions and trainings to the surrounding scavenging communities and scavenging children about the risks associated with the practice of scavenging and the consequences of scavenging in the dump site.

- ❖ Raise the awareness of the community on the alternative work opportunities rather than being entirely dependent on scavenging on the waste dumping site.
- ❖ Organize advocacy workshop on the rights of children for community members, police officers and kebele authorities in order to keep these children from abuse, neglect, discrimination and stigma.
- ❖ Psycho social rehabilitation should be given to these children in order to boost their self confidence, social interaction, and feeling of inferiority, rejection and insecurity simultaneously with other projects which is designed to improve the socio economic development of these children.
- ❖ The positive values of these children like warm parent child relationship, intra group solidarity and positive future prospects should be used as a good opportunity for withdrawal, rehabilitation and development of these children.
- ❖ Finally, general interventions which include activities oriented towards reliving temporary ills of scavenging, developing the future potential of scavenging children or creating more political room for maneuvering on issue of scavenging should be undertaken by concerned bodies.

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Annex I

Interview Schedule

Introduction

This interview check list is prepared to collect data on the psychosocial aspect of scavenging children in the dump site of Addis Ababa in special place called 'Koshe'. Therefore, I kindly request you to provide me genuine response in our interview session. I assure you that everything of your personal information remains confidential. For this reason you are not asked to provide your names and address except some demographic data that is relevant for the study. Finally I would like to thank you for your cooperation.

I. Background of the child

1. Age _____
2. Place of birth _____
3. Place of living (sub city) _____ Keble _____
4. Educational background
 - 4.1 attending class (grade level) _____
 - 4.2 dropout (grade level) _____
 - 4.3 never was a student (why) _____
 - 4.4 If you are a dropout what was the reason

5. What is your current living arrangement?

1. Live with both parents
 2. Live only with mother
 3. Live only with father
 4. Live with siblings
 5. Live alone
 6. Others _____
6. Living arrangement of your parents?
1. Divorced
 2. Live together
 3. Others _____
7. Do your parents have health problems?

1. Yes

2. No

If your answer is yes what kind of health problem they are suffering from _____

II. Reasons for scavenging

1. When did you started waste picking? _____

2. Describe the circumstances that prevailed in your life before you started the work of scavenging? _____

3. What leads you to the life of scavenging? _____

4. How do you spend the many that you get through scavenging?

5. Is there anybody who could be hurt if you quit scavenging?

1. Yes

2.No

If your answer is yes, why and how _____

6. Have you ever tried to quit the work of scavenging? _____

1. Yes

2.No

If no why _____

If yes why did you return to the life of scavenging? _____

7. Do you need to quit waste picking? _____

1. Yes

2.No

If you want to quit scavenging what do you think makes you keep working?

If no why _____

8. Do you think scavenging is a problem? _____

1. Yes

2.No

If yes, why _____

If no, why _____

9. Explain the kind of problem that you come across while scavenging?

III. Future orientation

1. What do you think of your future life? _____

2. Do you think that you will have a better life with other job sector (how?) _____

3. What kind of person would you like to be?

IV. Social relationship of scavenging children

- Relationship with family

1. How do you see your Interaction with your family members?

2. Have you ever been involved in any discussion with your family members?

1) Yes

2) No

3. What do you feel when you spend the time with your family?

1) it makes me happy 2) it makes me unhappy

4. What do you feel when you are with your family

1) I feel loneliness 2) I don't feel loneliness

If you feel loneliness, why? _____

- Peer Relationship

1. Do you have non scavenging friends?

1) Yes I do have

2) No I don't have

If your answer is No why don't you have? _____

2. Do you play with non scavenging children?

1) Yes I do 2) No I don't

If your answer is no, why _____

3. With whom do you spend most of your time?

1) With non scavenging peers

2) With scavenging peers

3) With both scavenging and none scavenging peers

4. Do none scavenging peers encourage you to play with them?

1) Yes, they do

2) No, they don't

If your answer is 'b' why do you think is the reason? _____

5. Have you ever tried to interact with non scavenging peers of your own age

1) I sometimes try to do

2) Most of the time I try to do

3) I never try to do

If your answer is no '3' why? _____

- Perception and Reaction of society

1. How do you perceive the reaction of the community towards your involvement in the work of scavenging? _____

2. Have you ever encountered any kind of problem caused by the society because of your involvement in scavenging (police, peers, neighbors ...)?

3. How do you see your relationship with the community before and after your involvement in the life of scavenging?

1. If it is not good, why _____

2. If it turned for the better, how _____

4. What changes, positive and negative, have you observed on your social behavior (with peers, family, community) after your involvement in scavenging? _____

Annex 2

I. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guidelines

For families of scavenging children

1. What is the reason for your child involvement in scavenging?
2. What kind of problems are the children facing for their involvement in the life of scavenging (by the community or the nature of the work)?
3. What is the reaction of the community towards the scavenging children's?

II. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guidelines

(For Birhan Abunargawi Andenet Meredajae idir leaders and members)

1. What do you think of the main factors for the involvement of children in scavenging?
2. What do you think the reaction of the society towards the work of scavenging?
3. What do you think the aggravating factor for the practice of scavenging?
4. What do you suggest should be done to reduce the problem of scavenging children?

Anexs 3



Photo taken by Eshetu Genemo



Photo taken by Eshetu Genemo



Aerial map of Koshe/solid waste disposal site

Photo Source: Addis Ababa city Administration

