

Circumstances contributing to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in a rural area

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my wife Ms. Salvation Khoza and son Marumo Moeletsi Ethan Jnr. Mamabolo for their unwavering emotional support during the challenging periods of my studies. *“I may have been the one with the glory but you were the wind beneath my wings”* (Gladys Knight). This study is also dedicated to all adolescents’ in the rural area Marshite whom amidst all odds continue to strive for the betterment of their lives and protection from sexual abuse.

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DECLARATION STATEMENT

I, Marumo Nyabane Mamabolo, hereby state that the manuscripts with the title: ***Circumstances contributing to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in a rural area*** is my own work.

Signature

Date

SUMMARY

Circumstances contributing to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in a rural area

Keywords: Adolescent, circumstances, rural area, sexual abuse, vulnerable

In rendering child care protection services to adolescents in the Marshite area as a social worker in the Department of Social Development, the researcher recognised that an increased number of adolescents are sexually abused also by persons known to them. The sexual abuses are not reported because adolescents and caregivers lacked adequate knowledge of what is sexual abuse and services provided by social workers available for them. This became evident from the intervention programme statistics which indicated that adolescents and caregivers were not aware of other sexually abusive behaviours than penetration.

The aim of the research was to identify circumstances that contribute to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in a rural area in order to enable social workers to empower adolescents and caregivers on how to prevent sexual abuse. Also to develop and evaluate programmes and services rendered to sexually abused adolescents and their families. Purposive voluntary sampling was used to select adolescents participating in empowerment programmes of social workers in the Marshite area.

The research reveals that children in the Marshite area lack sufficient knowledge on child sexual abuse. The circumstances within which the adolescents live in the Marshite area make the adolescents victims of sexual abuse. Looking at the services that social workers render to the sexually abused adolescents and their caregivers in the Marshite area, there is a need for skilled and knowledgeable forensic social workers who can develop empowerment programmes and render relevant services to sexually abused adolescents and their families in the Marshite community.

OPSOMMING

Omstandighede wat tot die kwetsbaarheid van adolessente se seksuele misbruik in landelike gebiede bydra

Sleuteltermes: Adolessente, kwesbaarheid, landelike gebied, seksuele misbruik

In kinder beveiliging dienste aan adolessente in die Marshite gebied het die navorser as maatskaplike werker in die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling daarvan bewus geword dat 'n toenemende aantal adolessente seksueel misbruik word, ook deur persone bekend aan hulle. Die seksuele misbruike word nie aangemeld omdat adolessente en hulle versorgers nie oor die nodige kennis van seksuele misbruik beskik nie asook die dienste wat deur maatskaplike werkers beskikbaar gestel word nie. Dit blyk duidelik uit statistieke verkry van die intervensieprogram, dat adolessente en versorgers, nie bewus was van ander vorme van seksuele misbruike as slegs penetrasie nie.

Die doel van die navorsing was om omstandighede wat tot adolessente se kwetsbaarheid in landelike gebiede, rakende seksuele misbruik te identifiseer, sodat maatskaplike werkers adolessente en versorgers kan bemagtig hoe om seksuele misbruik te voorkom. Om ook programme te ontwikkel en dienste aan adolessente wat seksueel misbruik is en hulle families te evalueer. Daar is van doelgerigte vrywillige steekproeftrekking gebruik gemaak om adolessente, betrokke by bemagtigingsprogramme van maatskaplike werkers in die Marshite gebied, te identifiseer.

Die navorsing het daarop gewys dat adolessente in die Marshite gebied kennis ontbreek rakende seksuele misbruik. Die omstandighede waarin adolessente in die Marshite gebied leef, maak hulle slagoffers van seksuele misbruik. As daar gekyk word na die dienste wat maatskaplike werkers aan seksueel misbruike adolessente en hulle families in die Marshite gebied lewer, is dit duidelik dat daar 'n behoefte aan opgeleide kundige forensiese maatskaplike werkers bestaan wat bemagtigingsprogramme kan ontwikkel en toepaslike dienste aan seksueel misbruike adolessente en hulle families in die Marshite gemeenskap kan lewer.

FOREWORD

The article format was chosen in accordance with regulations A.7.5.7.4 for the degree MA in Social Work: Forensic Practice. The article will comply with the requirements of the journal *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE AUTHORS

SOCIAL WORK

The journal publishes articles, brief communications, book reviews and commentary articles already published from the field of Social Work. Contributions may be written in English. All contributions will be critically reviewed by at least two referees on whose advice contributions will be accepted or rejected by the editorial committee. All refereeing is strictly confidential. Manuscripts may be returned to the authors if extensive revision is required or if the style of presentation does not conform to the practice. Commentary on articles already published in the Journal must be submitted with appropriate captions, the name(s) and address (es) of the author(s), preferably not exceeding 5 pages.

The entire manuscript must be submitted, plus one clear copy as well as a diskette with all the text, preferably in MS Word (Word Perfect) or ASSII. Manuscripts must be typed, doubled spaced on the one side of the A4 paper only. Use the Harvard system for references. Short references in the text: When word-for-word quotations, facts or arguments from other sources are cited, the surname(s), year of publication and the page number(s) must appear in parenthesis in the text. More details concerning sources referred to in the text should appear at the end of the manuscript under the caption "References". The sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors.

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CIRCUMSTANCES CONTRIBUTING TO ADOLESCENTS' VULNERABILITY TOWARDS SEXUAL ABUSE IN A RURAL AREA

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Keywords: Adolescent, circumstances, rural area, sexual abuse, vulnerable

1 INTRODUCTION

Sexual abuse of adolescent children is a serious issue facing impoverished rural communities in the Limpopo Province. The increase in reports of adolescents' sexually abused by members of their own families are captured both in the media and Social Workers' reports. The vulnerability that adolescent children face towards sexual abuse relates to the social-structural circumstances within which the children live. Preventing and reducing the adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse requires an integration of awareness programmes with collaborative investigations and sufficient training of all professionals involved in helping these children.

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

An adolescent, according to Bezuidenhout and Campher (2006:24), is an individual who is in the developmental phase that occurs from puberty to maturity and between ages 12 and 18 years. The World Health Organisation (2013:1) defines adolescence as "the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, from ages 10 to 19 years. It represents one of the critical transitions in the life span and is characterized by a tremendous pace in growth and change that is second only to that of infancy".

Adolescents in the village Marshite in the Limpopo Province are like any other adolescents in remote rural areas who have been exposed to child sexual abuse,

which includes exposure to sexual penetration and coercion to witness sexual acts (Deblinger *et al.*, 2010:92; Finkelhor *et al.*, 2009:1414; PHEME, 2014; Putnam, 2003:269; and Seabi & Ntsoane, 2014). Between March 2003 and March 2013, 43703 cases, according to the South African Police Services, of sexually abused children were reported in the Limpopo Province (*City Press*, 2013; and South Africa 2011/2012). The children were below the age of 16 years and had not attained the age to consent to sex and were sexually abused by persons known to them (South Africa 2011-2012; Strode *et al.*, 2010:247; and Vermeulen & Fouché, 2006:20). According to Jewkes *et al.* (2005:1810), Madu and Peltzer (2000:263), Pretorius and Pfeifer (2010:63), cases of adolescents' exposed to sexual abuse in a rural community are on the increase.

As a social worker working in the Department of Social Development in the village Marshite, the researcher is frequently confronted with cases of sexual abused children. These children are mostly between the ages 12 to 15 years. According to Clarfelt (2001:1), Jewkes *et al.*, (2005:181) and Madu and Peltzer (2000:263), sexual abuse cases of children by people they know are on the increase and not uncommon in a rural family. According to the information discussed, the researcher wanted to explore what factors contribute to the sexual abuse of adolescents, of ages 12 to 15 years, in a rural area.

According to the Criminal Law Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (South Africa, 2007), sexual penetration includes any act that causes penetration to any extent whatsoever by (a) the genital organs of one person into or beyond the genital organs, anus, or mouth of another person; (b) any other part of the body of one person or, any object, including any part of the body of an animal, into or beyond the genital organs or anus of another person; or (c) the genital organs of an animal, into or beyond the mouth of another person. When committed against a child below the age of 16 years, the perpetrator may be found guilty of the offence of having committed an act of consensual sexual penetration with a child. Section 21 of the Criminal Law Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (South Africa, 2007) declares compelling or causing a child to be in the presence of or watch the perpetrator and another person commit a sexual act unlawful, and the perpetrator(s) may be found guilty of an offence of compelling or causing a child to witness a sexual offence.

Adolescents exposed to sexual abuse are likely to experience disrupted sexual development and sexual identity (Berlinger, 2003:12). This is because during adolescence, children experience the emergence of sexual identity and self-awareness (Maikovich-Fong & Jaffee, 2010:431). Sexual development includes the knowledge and beliefs adolescents come to learn and show rather than only the physical changes that occur as they grow (Offermann *et al.*, 2008:180). Being exposed to sexual abuse may result in the onset of age-inappropriate and problematic sexual behaviours (Farmer & Pollock, 2003:102; Flanagan, 2010:60; and Kellogg, 2009:992). These sexual behaviours are developmentally inappropriate, intrusive or abusive; associated with aggression and coercion; are displayed persistently and regularly; and result in emotional distress and physical pain (Flanagan, 2010:60; Kellogg, 2009:992; and Offermann *et al.*, 2008:180).

Sizes of families on the caseloads of social workers in the village of Marshite are large, with the minimal number being between six to ten or more people sharing a house. According to the research done by Mahura (2013), Modise (2005), Roux (2002) and Sito (2008), sizes of families in especially rural areas are increasing. The average number of people in a family is found to be between five to fifteen members. Overcrowding, according to Mahura (2013:17) and Rammala (2009:50), can play a role in the sexual behaviour of children and sexual crimes. Extended family members have to share the minimal sleeping space a family has. This compromises the cultural practice that proper sleeping arrangement for children and adults be separate. Overcrowding households present an opportunity for adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse (Thoman, 2006:413; and Xianchen *et al.*, 2003:839).

In Marshite, overcrowded households, alcohol abuse, absence of primary caregivers and inadequate social, medical and legal resources are likely to increase adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse. The consumption of traditional alcohol-beverages in Marshite by middle-aged adults, most of who are primary caregivers, is widespread and increases the risks for adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse (Choma *et al.*, 2007:62). Impelling cues such as sexual arousal tend to be immediate, resulting in increased attention to arousal cues. The result is an increased likelihood of sexual risk behaviour (Davis *et al.*, 2007:843; and Ovens, 2006:4).

Caregivers play an important role in preventing sexual abuse of a child but also in the supporting of a sexually abused child (Spies, 2006b:274; and Pollock & Farmer, 2005:28-30). According to Levinson and Morin (2001:23), children living in a home where they are unsupervised, sexual abuse should be considered as high risk. In the absence of a primary caregiver, the risks for exposure to sexual abuse for adolescents in the Marshite village are real. The loss of a primary caregiver to HIV and AIDS-related death, as well as the movement of caregivers to cities in a quest for employment opportunities, increase a child and an adolescent's vulnerability to sexual abuse (Mahadisa, 2012:6; and Rwkelamira & Kirsten, 2003:1). In many cases, adolescents are left without adequate supervision and protection by mature, responsible adults, thus making them targets for sexual abuse. A family can have a constellation of factors predisposing adolescents to sexual abuse (Lauer & Lauer, 2006:347). As Madu (2001:1) and Smallbone *et al.* (2008:16) indicate, child sexual abuse occurs within secretive family contexts.

The exposure of children and adolescents to pornography and sexual activities can play an important role in the sexual abuse of a child and an adolescent. The harm inflicted on children as a result of access adolescents have to networks such as the Internet, cell phones, computers and published materials like magazines, is multiple (Bezuidenhout & Campher, 2006:33-35). Offenders who target children via pornography represent a minority of child molesters. Those adults such as "family members, guardians and people in their community, are guilty of the majority of sexual offences" (Bezuidenhout & Campher, 2006:36). Porn has become a major presence in the lives of the youth, and while a majority of teenagers surveyed, according to Anon (2014a), said their parents expressed concern about sexual content, but that concern has not led to discussion or supervision, and few parents are using available technology to block sexual content. "Parents need to improve dialogue with their children and their own awareness level. They need to be the ones setting the boundaries in the house. Overall, boys aged 13 and 14 years living in rural areas are the most likely of their age group to access pornography" (Anon, 2014a).

Resources in a community can also play an important role in preventing sexual abuse and assessing the sexually abused child and adolescent. Community resources in the village of Marshite are limited. The primary health care centre in

the Marshite village is far distanced and understaffed. There are two professional nurses and three enrolled nursing assistance. This limited the opportunities for identification of possible sexual abuse of a child but also an adolescent (Lewis, 2003:2; Thutse, 2008:3; and Tshitangano, 2013:1). Unaddressed feelings, according to Goodyear-Brown (2012:453), go underground and often result in other problems such as substance abuse. Treatment after the sexual abuse of an adolescent by a therapist who has experience and specialised training in the areas of particularly sexual abuse trauma, experience with the adolescent population and to meet adolescents where they are emotional, are very important variables according to Goodyear-Brown (2012:448).

Police officers and other members of the multi-disciplinary team handling reports of child sexual abuse are not always adequately trained or experienced (Nqaphi, 2013:40). Investigations tend to be prolonged, with children having to testify repeatedly to different people (Lewis, 2003:2; and Muller & Marowa-Wilkerson, 2011:13). Given the negative effects that follow, and the risks that predispose adolescents to sexual abuse in Marshite, identifying experiences adolescents have regarding exposure to sexual abuse is important. What we do not know about adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse in Marshite, as Lewis (2003:6) indicates, far outweighs what we know.

All of the above-mentioned circumstances may contribute to adolescents' exposure towards sexual abuse. Descriptions of the circumstances contributing to adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse in the rural area Marshite was obtained by this research. By revealing insights into adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse in the rural area, it shall be possible to empower adolescents and primary caregivers with knowledge on how to prevent child and adolescent sexual abuse. Deblinger *et al.*, (2010:92) indicate that efforts to enhance adolescents' knowledge and skills regarding sexual abuse are necessary to decrease the likelihood of sexual abuse and increase their confidence and skills to disclose sexual abuse. This is crucial since research show that adolescents and their primary caregivers have little knowledge of what constitutes child sexual abuse and how to respond to it (Deblinger *et al.*, 2010:92; Mahura, 2013:35-36; and Nqaphi, 2013:26-28). Smallbone *et al.*, (2008:1) corroborate that the extent to which patterns of adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse can be reliably identified, the focus of

prevention strategies can be narrowed and prevention resources can accordingly be prioritised. This study is important to a village such as Marshite in order to enable social workers to empower adolescents and caregivers with the knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse in this area.

The following research question was formulated:

What circumstances contribute to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in a rural area?

3 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to identify the circumstances contributing to the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse in a rural area in order to enable social workers to empower adolescents and parents with knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse in the Marshite village.

4 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The identifying of circumstances that contribute to the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse in the rural area Marshite will enable social workers to empower adolescents and parents with knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse in this area.

5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Becker (2005:13) points out that many authors present overviews of the most influential theories of social work. There is no easy way, says Becker (2005:13) of classifying the wide range of theories available. Throughout their work with clients, social workers "must organizations and communities be able to apply a theoretical understanding of human behaviour, human diversity and social functioning to their day-to-day practice in social work" (Du Bois & Miley, 2005:52). Social workers are trained to acquire a systems perspective in the work with individuals, groups and families (Zastrow, 2008:50).

Although there are different theories such as the psychodynamic, learning and systems theories, the focus for purposes of this study is on the systems theory. The systems theory attempts to understand the individual as a system of interacting

elements. Systems theories are those concepts that emphasize reciprocal relationships between the elements that constitute a whole. These concepts also emphasize the relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, or communities and mutually influencing factors in the environment. Systems theories focus on the interrelationships of elements in nature, encompassing physics, chemistry, biology, and social relationships (Anon, 2014b:2). By means of the systems theory the researcher intervenes by looking at a holistic view of people such as adolescents and their environment and bringing the concept of person-in-environment back into perspective (Robbins *et al.*, 1998:59). With the systems theory the researcher can evaluate the impact of the different systems on the vulnerability of the adolescents towards sexual abuse in the rural area of Marshite.

6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Neuman (2011:2), research methodology refers to a scientific process constituting of techniques that the researcher may use in empirically determining all that which is to be known (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006:6). Fouché (2011:466) states that research methodology includes the research design, methods of data collection, sampling, analysis and interpretation of data as well as resultant conclusions. With regard to research methodology, following are the methods and procedures used by the researcher in finding answers to the research question:

6.1 Literature review

According to Kaniki (2006:19), reviewing literature pertinent to the research subject is significant for providing a context through which a researcher becomes able to build upon what has been done already. For the purposes of this research, a literature review was conducted by the researcher in order to provide a theoretical background for the study and to contextualize core concepts as well as to explain how the study will add to the existing body of knowledge (Silverman *et al.*, 2004:85). The literature review included themes such as statistics of sexual abuse incidents of adolescents in South Africa and circumstances contributing to the sexual abuse of children and especially adolescents. A literature review took place in the beginning of the research as well as during the research aiming at contributing to a clearer

understanding of the nature and meaning of the research problem that has been identified (Fouché & Delport, 2011:134).

South African documents and the literature on adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse in rural areas were consulted. This was accomplished through numerous databases such as EBSCO host, Erik, Government Documents, Social Science Index, South African Journal and Social Work Abstracts.

6.2 Research Context

Marshite is a rural area of the Limpopo Province constituted by almost eighteen geographical sections. The people in this area lead a traditional life style. Everything that is done in the village has to be reported to the headmen. Most of the people don't believe in reporting cases such as sexual abuse to social workers, instead they report them to the local traditional authority responsible for adjudicating disputes and resolving issues brought to them. Most of the people in the village perceive social workers as outsiders who may attempt to alter their ways of life. The relationship between them and the social workers, despite the efforts of social workers, are characterized by some lack of trust. This is particularly evident where sexual abuse cases are identified. Most of the sexual abuse cases are identified by social workers during school presentations where some children just burst out and cry. Thereafter, during the assessment of the child, the social worker realised that the child was sexually abused. The primary caregivers of children do not believe that child sexual abuse happens in their village. The same sentiments are shared by the local headmen who yield more power in decision making. For example, on the 23 of January 2014, social workers of the Department of Social Development initiated a stop "Child Sexual Abuse" campaign where they recruited men to be part of this. The headmen together with most men in the community declined to participate stating that "it's not cultural for them to talk about sexual matters with, and in front of children".

The researcher as a man has a good relationship with the headmen by service delivering in the past to people in the community. Access to the community was given to the researcher by the headmen. Although the letter of permission given might unduly influence participation, families in the village Marshite consider them as proof of observed protocol. As tradition has been followed by the researcher, the

families were more welcoming and ready giving access to their adolescent children to participate in the research.

6.3 Research design

The qualitative approach was followed. (Botma *et al.*, 2010:42-43). Qualitative researchers are concerned with understanding rather than explanation, with naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:308). The objective of this research was exploratory because the researcher wanted to gain insight into the situation of the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95). The researcher need to know more about what factors contribute to the vulnerability of adolescents being sexually abused especially in a rural area such as Marshite.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:72) define 'research design' as a blueprint, plan, structure and strategy of investigating and answering the research question. According to Grinnell (2001:231), research design is a plan that includes every aspect of a proposed research study from conceptualization of the problem to the dissemination of findings. The **phenomenology** design was used in this research. According to Fouché and Schurink (2011:316) with this approach the researcher "strives to describe the phenomenon as accurately as possible, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts".

The researcher wanted to explore, describe, and understand the circumstances contributing towards the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse in a rural area such as the village of Marshite in the Limpopo Province (Botma *et al.*, 2010:110).

6.4 Research sample

According to Strydom (2011a:223-224), the term sample comprises elements or subset of the population considered for inclusion in the study. In selecting a qualitative research sample, the researcher focused on individuals who possess the characteristics necessary to answer questions regarding the specific topic being studied namely the vulnerability of adolescents regarding sexual abuse (Botma *et al.*, 2010:199).

6.5 Research population

Burns and Grove (2009:714) cited in Botma *et al.* (2010:6) indicates that a population consist of all elements that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. The total population for the study included adolescents staying in the Marshite village who participated in empowerment programmes of social workers in the Department of Social Development as well as social workers rendering social work services to sexual abused children in this area until data saturation. According to Larkin *et al.* (2014:5), social workers are likely to be the first persons to whom children disclose sexual abuse, and they may have substantial knowledge of circumstances exposing children to sexual abuse as a result of the nature of the services they render to the sexually abused children. Adolescents and social workers as participants were selected through purposive voluntary sampling (French, Greeff & Watson, 2014:104; and Strydom, 2011a: 232). The participants consisted of two groups, namely, adolescents and social workers.

Group 1: Adolescents

Adolescents as participants were (a) between the ages of 14 to 16 years in the rural village of Marshite in the Limpopo Province because these adolescents are familiar with the circumstances in the village and they are able to identify circumstances that lead to their vulnerability to sexual abuse, (b) had previously participated in empowerment programmes by social workers from the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare, and (c) were not on the caseloads of these social workers. Adolescents were included until data saturation was reached. Data saturation, according to Polit and Beck (cited in Botma *et al.*, 2010:330) and Strydom and Delport (2011:393), is the collection of data to the point where a sense of closure is attained because new data yield redundant information. The researcher has to evaluate collected data in order to know when saturation has been reached.

The researcher used adolescents who, according to the social workers, have knowledge about the circumstances in Marshite that contribute to the sexual abuse of the adolescent. By means of discussing issues about sexual abuse during the empowerment programmes, the social workers could identify adolescents also because of their expressive and articulate abilities that enable them to tell in their

own words about the circumstances that contribute to adolescent sexual abuse in the village Marshite.

Group 2: Social workers

Social workers from the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare who delivered services to children, such as adolescents who were sexually abuse, were recruited for the study until data saturation was reached. Social workers as participants in service delivering to these adolescents could help in identifying circumstances in the Marshite community that contributes to the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse.

Inclusion criteria

Adolescents

- Adolescents whose primary caregivers gave written informed consent that their adolescents can be part of the research and who also gave written informed consent that the interview may be tape recorded, were included in the research.
- Adolescents from the empowerment programmes of the social workers from the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare between the ages of 14 to 16 years, whose primary caregivers gave written informed consent to them and allowed them to be approached and included and who gave written assent to be part of the research.
- Adolescents who further gave written informed assent for the interview to be tape recorded.
- Adolescents who were not on the caseloads of social workers.
- Adolescents who could speak and understand English. The participants mostly answered the questions in English but participants who sometimes communicate in Sepedi were accommodated by the researcher who could understand and speak Sepedi. It was therefore not necessary to use a translator.

Social workers

- Social workers from the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare in the Marshite District who provider service to adolescents who were sexually abuse.
- Social workers who gave written informed consent to be part of the research.

- Social workers who could speak and understand English.
- Social workers who gave written informed consent to tape record the interview.

Exclusion criteria

Adolescents

- Adolescents who were not part of the empowerment programmes offered by the social workers from the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare.
- Adolescents whose primary caregivers did not want to give written informed consent that their adolescents can be part of the research as well as for the interview to be tape recorded.

Social workers

- Social workers from the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare in the Marshite District who did not deliver services to children and adolescents who were sexually abuse.

6.6 Sample size

The sample size consisted of 20 purposefully selected adolescents between the ages 14 and 16 years staying in the Marshite village and who participated in empowerment programmes of social workers from the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare. Ten social workers who rendered services to sexually abused adolescents from the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare were also included in the research. The selected adolescents were not on the caseloads of the social workers selected.

6.7 Data collection

The researcher followed a qualitative approach to collecting data from the adolescents and social workers as participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each consented participant and lasted for about 45-60 minutes and were audio-recorded using an interview schedule written in English. **(Annexures 7 and 8)** The main task, according to Monette *et al.*, (2005:79), is to record the responses of the respondents. Greeff (2005:234; 298), Rubin and Babbie (2005:457) feel that an audio-recorder is a powerful tool because it allows the interviewer to keep full attention focused on participants. Audio-recordings were

translated from Sepedi to English by the researcher when necessary. Field notes by the researcher were written in English after each interview.

The interview schedule contained not more than six questions regarding adolescents' understanding of the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse in the Marshite village. Questions included in the interview schedule for social worker participants were social workers' experiences regarding adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in the Marshite village. The interview schedule was evaluated by experts in the Social Work Division of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus and also by three adolescents and two social workers who were not part of the research, to determine the clarity of the questions. Subsequent adjustments were made to ensure quality control

Procedures followed by the researcher

The researcher followed the procedures described below in conducting the study:

- Approval from the Health Research Ethical Committee of the Faculty Health Sciences of the North-West University to conduct this study in the Social Work Forensic Practice project was obtained. **(Annexure 1)**
- The researcher obtained written permission from the village headmen as gatekeeper to get access into the community to conduct the research, after explaining the aim of the research to him. **(Annexure 2)**
- The researcher obtained written permission from the District Social Work Manager in the Department of Social Development in the Marshite area after explaining the aim of the research to conduct research. The social workers of Child Welfare are under the auspices of the Department of Social Development and are funded by the Department of Social Development and therefore permission was also obtained to include social workers from Child Welfare and the adolescents attended their programmes. **(Annexure 3)**
- After obtaining written permission from the District Social Work Manager in the Department of Social Development to conduct the research, social workers were identified and the researcher discussed the aim of the research with the social workers who acted as “go-between” the researcher and the caregivers of the adolescents as well as the adolescents.

- After the social workers gave written permission to be part of the research, as “go-between agents”, the social workers identified adolescents for the research.
- After the social workers identified adolescents for the research, the aim, procedures, ethical aspects, benefits and discomforts of the research were explained to the adolescents and the adolescents’ primary caregivers.
- Written consent to participate in the study was then obtained from the social workers, adolescents and primary caregivers of the adolescents. **(Annexures 4 5 and 6)**
- The interviews with the social workers were held in their own offices.
- The place and time of each interview were scheduled with the participants well in advance.
- The researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews with each social worker individually. The interview with each social worker lasted approximately 40-60 minutes.
- Permission was obtained from the social workers, adolescents and primary caregivers of the adolescents to tape-record the interviews.
- Appointments regarding the place and time for interviews with the adolescents were made by the researcher.
- The location and time of each interview were arranged with each adolescent. Interviews with the adolescents were between 45-60 minutes.
- Interviews with the adolescents were conducted at the researcher’s office.

6.8 Data analysis

All data derived from the tape-recorded interviews with the adolescents and social workers were transcribed. The identified themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data processing and interpretation provided an understanding of the adolescents and social workers’ perspectives on child sexual abuse in the Marshite village and the underlying meanings regarding circumstances contributing towards adolescents’ vulnerability towards sexual abuse in this rural area. In order to ensure qualitative validity and accuracy of the data, the researcher made use of member checking (Botma *et al.*, 2010:231) by taking the final report back to participants and following-up interviews with all adolescents and social worker participants. One senior social worker was used as a co-coder and peer reviewer of the data for

accuracy, correctness and reliability (Botma *et al.*, 2010:224; 232). Qualitative data were analysed manually and the guidelines when analysing the data of Botma *et al.* (2010:213) and Schurink *et al.* (2011:402) were used. The used guidelines were the following:

- The initial research was kept in mind.
- All data were transcribed.
- The correctness of transcripts was ensured by an external person who transcribed the data and the researcher verified the correctness.
- When translation was needed an external person verified the information.
- Topics were coded.
- The processing and interpretation of the qualitative data were done by hand and themes and sub-themes were identified.
- To ensure qualitative validity the researcher made use of member checking. According to Botma *et al.*, (2010:231) member checking is to determine the accuracy of the findings by taking the final report back to the participants. This could be done by a follow-up interview with each or some of the participants.
- The researcher also used one of the senior social workers as a co-coder and a peer reviewer to ensure the accuracy of the data (Botma *et al.*, 2010:224; 232).
- The researcher checked the reliability of the data by checking the recorded transcripts for correctness and also used a senior social worker to double check for the correctness of analysing the data (Botma *et al.*, 2010:231).

6.9 Ethical aspects

Ethics relates to moral standards that a researcher should uphold in all stages of the research. Research ethics are developed to protect participants of research from abuse by researchers (Bless *et al.*, 2006:140). Approval from Health Research Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences to conduct this study in Social Work Forensic Practice was received. The ethical aspects pertaining to this study were dealt with in the following way:

- **Actions and competence of the researcher**

According to Mnisi (2012:8), researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake research investigations. The researcher worked for the Department of Social Development and has conducted

interviews with child victims of sexual abuse. He continued to keep abreast of knowledge pertaining to appropriate interviewing techniques from pertinent literature in order to refine his interviewing skills. The researcher was trained to do interviews not only in social work practice, but also during a module named Social Work Research, during the Master's degree. The researcher also got experience in research projects by other researchers. As a registered social worker the researcher had to obey the codes of ethics and rules for social workers of the South African Council for Social Service Professions and therefore informed the participants beforehand about the potential impact the interviews about sexual abuse of children and adolescents may have on them.

- **Written Informed consent**

The researcher obtained permission from the District Social Work Manager in the Department of Social Development of the social workers. It was stated clearly that participation in the study was voluntary and that no one was to feel obliged to participate (Strydom, 2011b:116). After permission was obtained, the aim of this research was verbally explained in detail to the social worker, adolescents and their primary caregivers. A preface outlining the research, its voluntary nature and statement of confidentiality was included on the semi-structured qualitative interview schedule (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:521; and Creswell, 2003:64). A written consent form from the adolescents' primary caregivers as well as the social workers, and an assent form from the adolescents were obtained. These forms entailed statement of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. Only social workers, adolescents and primary caregivers of the adolescents who agreed with the statements and who gave written consent and assent, were included in this research. The participants were informed that they may freely participate in the study and that they are able to withdraw from research anytime without any consequences (Butz, 2008:249).

- **Confidentiality**

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject of this research, the social workers, adolescents and their primary caregivers' were assured of confidentiality. All tape-recorded materials and completed interview schedules were safely stored first in a locked cabinet in the researchers' office where only he had access to and then after the research they were handed in to be stored at a store room at the Social Work Division of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus so that none other

than the research team (researcher, study leader, co-study leader and the leader of the main project) will have access to these materials (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:523). Interviews with each participant were held separately in the social worker's offices as well as in the researcher's office in privacy to avoid interruptions (Greeff, 2011:350). The researcher gave a number beforehand to each adolescent participant such as respondent 1, respondent 2 et cetera, and to each social worker with A, B et cetera in advance for data analysis, instead of using their names to maintain confidentiality. The raw data are kept at the Social Work Division of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus for at least five years locked up in the store room.

- **Avoidance of harm**

The researcher treated all participants with respect during the interviews in order not to emotionally harm them. Participants in social research, according to Mboniswa (2005:11) and Strydom (2011b:115) can be harmed in a physical and or emotional manner. Harm to respondents in social research will mainly be of an emotional nature. The researcher clarified possible misunderstandings of the information received from adolescents and social workers (Pilot & Beck, cited in Botma *et al.*, 2010:22). If participants, especially in qualitative research, are affected by problems generated by the research experience, debriefing sessions should be arranged to work through their experiences and its aftermath after the interview in order to handle their feelings (Babbie, 2001:475; Bless et al., 2006:142; and Patton, 2002:405).

Before obtaining informed consent, the researcher explained to social workers, adolescents and the primary caregivers of the adolescents that should a participant disclose sexual abuse of a child the disclosure must be reported to the social worker for further investigation. There were no disclosures during any of the interviews.

- **Gatekeeper**

A gatekeeper, according to Saunders (2014:1), is the person who controls research access. For example, the person within a group or community who makes the final decision as to whether to allow the researcher access to undertake the research. Gaining access to undertake social research is often problematic for researchers. Friends, contacts and colleagues and others may be willing to vouch for a researcher and act as research sponsors however, unless permission has been

granted by a gatekeeper from within the group, community or organization in which the research is planned, it is unlikely that access will be allowed in practice (Saunders, 2014:1). The researcher contacted the headman in the Marshite village of the Limpopo Province to do the research with adolescents and social workers regarding the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse. The researcher knew the headman in this village by means of services rendered to people in this area in the past and therefore gained access to do the research in this village.

(Annexure 2)

- **Benefits and risks**

Benefits for the participants in this study were empowerment of adolescents and primary caregivers with knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse of adolescents in the Marshite area. Benefits for the community were to decrease the likelihood of sexual abuse of adolescents and to increase adolescents and caregivers skills on how to disclose sexual abuse. This knowledge will finally contribute to the successful prosecution of alleged perpetrators. Efforts to enhance adolescents' and caregivers' knowledge and skills regarding sexual abuse are necessary.

The social work profession, especially in rural areas such as the Marshite community, benefited from this research. By knowing the circumstances contributing to the vulnerability of adolescents' to sexual abuse in a rural area, social workers can develop from now on empowerment programs for adolescents and caregivers to enhance their knowledge and skills in how to prevent sexual abuse not only of adolescents but also children.

Risks could have been emotional harm that may have occurred due to the disclosure of the adolescents regarding their sexual abuse or the sexual abuse of someone else during the interview. None of the participants were emotionally harmed and, therefore, one can conclude that the risks outweighed the emotional harm that might have occurred.

- **Costs and remuneration**

Respondents received refreshments after each interview for the inconveniences by participating in the research. Travelling expenses were paid by the researcher. The participants did not receive any kind of payment for their participation except for travelling expenses.

- **Release and publication of the findings**

Participants were informed about the findings of the research without offering too many details or impairing the principle of confidentiality (Strydom, 2011b:126). The findings of the study will also be introduced to the reading public in written form by means of a dissertation as well as an article in an accredited journal. The managers of the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare will be informed as Creswell (2009:29) deems it necessary, of results that will be published regarding the research project.

7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

While quantitative research demands that the utility of research be evaluated on measures of validity and reliability, qualitative research is evaluated by its trustworthiness. For this research, the following constructs were explicated and considered in establishing its trustworthiness: (a) credibility (b) transferability (c) dependability and (d) conformability.

FIGURE 1: STANDARDS, STRATEGIES AND APPLIED CRITERIA TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

| Epistemological standards | Strategies | Application |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Truth Value | Credibility | Credibility refers to internal invalidity. The researcher has confidence in the truth of the findings in regards to the participants as well as the context in which the research was undertaken. For the purpose of the study the researcher ensured credibility through member checking (Botma <i>et al.</i> , 2010:232 & Shenton, 2004:64). |
| Consistency | Dependability | Dependability refers to the replication of the study in the same context; making use of the same methods and with the same participants. To enable dependability the researcher included the following: |

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependable audit: the researcher will provide a detailed account on how data was collected. • Description of the methodology: to include in the research design what was planned and executed during the study. • The researcher ensured that data is correctly coded. • Peer review of data collected in the study by a senior social worker that was not part of the study (Botma <i>et al.</i>, 2010:232 & Shenton, 2004:64). |
| Applicability | Transferability | The findings in regard to this qualitative study, was specific to a small number of individuals in the Limpopo province. The researcher improved transferability by the selection of resources and sampling, saturation of data and the detailed description of the data (Botma <i>et al.</i> , 2010:232 & Shenton, 2004:64). |
| Neutrality | Conformability | Conformability entails the research process and results are free from prejudice. The researcher ensured that as far as possible the study's results were objective and was not based upon biases, motives and perspectives of the researcher |

8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Finding the respondents had been particularly challenging for the researcher. For example, adolescent children were all enrolling and spent most of their day time at school and travel long distance from school to home.

- It was challenging to conduct interviews during day time as the children arrived from school tired. Therefore, most of the interviews had to be conducted on weekends.
- The tight schedules that social workers had and the absence of other social workers who were on annual and maternity leaves made it very difficult for the researcher to access them at their workplaces.
- The use of the English language during the interviews sometimes appeared challenging to both the researcher and the adolescent children. The researcher had to sometimes repeat the questions asked and translate them into Sepedi.

9 DEFINITION OF TERMINOLOGY

- **Adolescent**

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* (2000:15), an adolescent is a young person between the ages of 13 and 18 years who is developing from childhood into adulthood. Bezuidenhout and Campher (2006:24) define an adolescent as an individual who is in the developmental phase that occurs from puberty to maturity and between ages 12 and 18 years. Kaplan (2004:1) and the World Health Organisation (2013:1) indicate that adolescence is:

"the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It represents one of the critical transitions in the life span and is characterized by a tremendous pace in growth and change that is second only to that of infancy".

- **Rural area**

Gxulwana (2010:2) indicates that no exact universally agreed upon definition of a rural area exist because defining rural is a contentious matter influenced by the realities of a nation's development and needs. However, Hart (2005:1149) and Shaohua *et al.*, (2011:34) state that: providing a definition of 'rural' for research purposes "should take consideration of the core aspects of rurality which are relevant to the topic that is being studied." In this study, a rural area is defined as a geographic locality characterized by high levels of poverty, insufficient shelter, low ratio of educated individuals, high unemployment rate and limited access to service essential to enabling residents' achieve a quality of life.

- **Sexual abuse**

According to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (South Africa, 2007), sexual abuse refers to an assault of a child or permitting a child to be sexually abused or assaulted and encouraging, inducing or forcing a child to be used for the sexual gratification of another person. Procuring or allowing a child to be procured for commercial sexual exploitation or in any way participating or assisting in the commercial sexual exploitation of a child. Using a child in or deliberately exposing a child to sexual activities or pornography.

Faller (1996:144) indicates that sexual abuse constitutes a physical contact between persons at different stages of development, which Nomdo (2014:3) regards as between an adult and child, for the purpose of sexual gratification of the mature person. Spies (2006a:269) mentions that child sexual abuse involves both contact and non-contact activities and may be intra-familial and extra-familial. Horvath *et al.*, (2014:11) indicate that extra-familial sexual abuse refers to sexual abuse of a child by a person outside the family unit and who may or may not be known to the child or family. According to Horvath *et al.* (2014:11), intra-familial sexual abuse is the sexual abuse of a child by a person known and related to them and regarded as close family member. Given that a child has not yet attained a level of developmental maturity to comprehend the meaning of sexual abuse, consent cannot be used as a defence (Brand, 2013:197; Denhere *et al.*, 2012:28; and Spies, 2006a:269).

- **Vulnerable**

According to Garutsa (2010:10), vulnerability refers to a “degree of exposure to factors that threaten one’s wellbeing and the extent to which the capacity of the individual, household and social group to cope with those factors is eroded.” Fussel (2007:156) indicates that ‘vulnerability’ signifies an individual or system’s susceptibility to increased risk resulting from exposure to danger that renders the individual or system’s abilities useless and affects welfare.

10 RESEARCH RESULTS

The findings revealed in this study and discussed below are based on the themes accrued from data analysed. The demographic information and number of the participants are described. Given that the aim of this study was to identify the

circumstances contributing to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in a rural area, ten Social Workers and twenty adolescents were interviewed. The semi-structured interviews were tape-recorded and an interview schedule was used. In describing the participants' responses, adolescents are indicated as participants 1-20 whereas social workers are described as participants A-J. The results of the interviews with the participants are described and discussed below.

10.1 Data received from the adolescents

10.1.1 Demographic information of the adolescents

The researcher wanted to know what were the adolescents' gender, age as well as in which area they lived in to ensure that they are adolescents between 14 to 16 years from the Marshite area.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF ADOLESCENT N=20

| Adolescent participant number [APN] | Age | Gender | Physical address (Sections) |
|--|------------|---------------|--|
| 1 | 14 | Female | Marshite |
| 2 | 15 | Female | Marshite |
| 3 | 16 | Male | Marshite |
| 4 | 14 | Female | Marshite |
| 5 | 14 | Female | Marshite |
| 6 | 15 | Female | Marshite |
| 7 | 16 | Male | Marshite |
| 8 | 16 | Male | Marshite |
| 9 | 14 | Female | Marshite |
| 10 | 15 | Male | Marshite |
| 11 | 15 | Female | Marshite |
| 12 | 14 | Female | Marshite |
| 13 | 14 | Female | Marshite |
| 14 | 15 | Male | Marshite |
| 15 | 14 | Female | Marshite |
| 16 | 14 | Male | Marshite |
| 17 | 16 | Female | Marshite |

| | | | |
|----|----|--------|----------|
| 18 | 16 | Male | Marshite |
| 19 | 14 | Female | Marshite |
| 20 | 15 | Male | Marshite |

The results reflected by the Table 1 indicate that there were both male and female adolescent participants. Male adolescents constituted 8 (40%) participants while female participants were made up by 12 (60%) participants. According to Pretorius *et al.* (2011:27), sexual abuse affects most children regardless of gender. However, Aderinto (2010:2738) indicates that female children are more likely to fall victim to sexual abuse. The vulnerability of female children towards sexual abuse is recognised by Mathison (2003:28) who mentions that in South Africa five female children out of nine are likely to be sexually abused before they reach age eighteen.

The level of child sexual abuses in South African rural areas is considerably high. The occurrence of child sexual abuses in rural areas does not signify that children in urban areas are not vulnerable to sexual abuse either. In rural areas, the circumstances in which the children live contribute to their vulnerability towards sexual abuse.

10.2 Themes and sub-themes regarding data received from the adolescents

TABLE 2: CATEGORIES OF FINDINGS

| Theme | Sub-theme |
|---|--|
| 1. Adolescents' understanding of sexual abuse | |
| 2. Persons from whom adolescents were told of sexual abuse | |
| 3. Factors that lead to adolescents being sexually abused in the Marshite village | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty and parents' inability to meet the adolescents' basic needs • Adolescents' risky-life styles and behaviours • Sharing sleeping rooms resulting from over-crowding |

| | |
|--|---|
| 4. How adolescents can prevent from being sexually abused | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers teaching adolescents about sexual abuse • Adolescents' abstinence from using substances |
| 5. Persons to assist adolescents when they are sexually abused | |

The results shown by Table 2 represent an overview of the themes and sub-themes identified during the data analysis process. The identified themes emerged from the participants' responses. The results shown in the Table 2 are discussed in detail below.

Theme 1: Adolescents' understanding of sexual abuse

During adolescence, children develop abstract thinking and reasoning skills that enables them think rationally about their situations and understand concepts such as good and bad touch (Hewitt, 1999:120). The adolescents' ability to distinguish between good and bad touch is essential to determine the understanding that the adolescents' have regarding sexual abuse (Kenny & Wurtele, 2010:494). The question on "what do you understand by sexual abuse" was important to identify the extent to which the adolescents' in the Marshite area are able to identify inappropriate sexually abusive behaviours.

Participant 2 mentioned that:

"Sexual abuse is the discrimination or use of force against either a girl or boy. It includes also discrimination in companies which do not allow hiring women or men because of gender."

This lack of sufficient knowledge on sexual abuse shown by participant 2 was evident in the other adolescents' answers.

"I do not know what sexual abuse is. But I think it means a girl who engages in sexual intercourse with a number of men who forces her even when she does not want because a girl's no is yes." [P6]

"It is having sex with many people, especially older men that I do not like because they give me money." [P10]

In certain instances, some of the adolescents showed an understanding of what is sexual abuse. The adolescents regard sexual abuse as referring to sexual intercourse with an older person whereby a child's permission to participate in the sexual act was not obtained. Participant 1 indicated, with regard to her understanding of sexual abuse, that:

“Sexual abuse is when a young girl is having sexual intercourse with an older man even when they are not in the mood of having sex with them. What I know is that the child is told to take off clothes for the older man so they could touch their vagina and have sex with them without their permission.”

The adolescents' understanding of the importance of consent in child sexual abuse is also mentioned by participant 5 who indicated that *“It is when an older man is forcing a girl to sleep with him without her permission because the girl cannot defend herself.”*

Although the adolescents were able to mention elements of sexual abuse, they did not have an understanding that a child's consent is immaterial in child sexual abuse. There is much emphasis among the adolescents' that men are more likely to sexually abuse adolescents than females. The adolescents regarded men as more likely to perpetuate child sexual abuse as shown by participants 1, 3 and 7 who mentioned that:

“But I know it has something to do with children who are raped by older men.” [P1]

“It is when an older man is forcing a girl to sleep with him without her permission because the girl cannot defend herself.” [P3]

“I understand sexual abuse to be when an adult man is using force to have sexual intercourse when you are not interested.” [P7]

The responses received from participants indicated that some of the adolescents are able to mention behaviours that are sexually abusive. These adolescents are also able to identify touches that are inappropriate and show an understanding of the differences in developmental stages of the person committing the sexual abuse and the child.

“Sexual abuse is when an old man forces a young girl to have sex with her without her permission and to touch his private parts.” [P11]

“It is occurs when a child is forced to watch pornography and act what she saw on an older person. When the child refuses, they may be beaten or stop being given food and pocket money.” [P12]

“It is when children refuse to undress and being touched in their private parts by a man and being beaten because they cannot defend themselves and they end up accepting to sleep [have sex] with the adult men.” [P14]

“Sexual abuse is when a young girl watches pornography with adults and is forced to do what the people in the pornographic movie were doing on the adult man like touching their penis and having sex with them.” [P16]

“Sexual abuse is when a young girl is having sexual intercourse with an older man even when they are not in the mood of having sex with them. What I know is that the child is told to take off clothes for the older man so they could touch their vagina and have sex with them without their permission.” [P20]

The responses the researcher received from the adolescents' showed that all adolescents' in this research did not have sufficient knowledge about what is sexual abuse. This was also the conclusion of research done by Nqaphi (2013:25) in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. It is important, according to Nqaphi (2013:25-26) and Wass (2014), that children need good information regarding sex and, especially, sexual abuse.

Theme 2: Persons who told adolescents of sexual abuse

On the question: “Who told you about sexual abuse?” the majority of the adolescents mentioned that they were told about sexual abuse by their Life Orientation teachers and social workers. Only three of the adolescents mentioned parents as persons who told them about sexual abuse. These adolescents expressed, however, their desire to have conversations about sexual abuse with their parents. Soona *et al.*, (2013:164) state that parents play an “essential role in influencing adolescents' sexual decision-making” and honest communication

between parents and adolescents about sexual abuse may encourage adolescents' willingness to disclose sexual abuse. The responses that the researcher received from the adolescents are the following:

"I heard of sexual abuse from my Life Orientation teacher, and Social Workers who often visit our school. My parents never told me anything about sexual abuse and I do not think they will tell me about it because it is something that they believe will never happen to me." **[P1 and 8]**

"My Life Orientation teacher told us about sexual abuse and persons who abuse children in our classroom. She motivated us to stop child sexual abuse by telling Social Workers if it happens to us in our families because it will affect and damage our brains and our future." **[P2, 10 and 14]**

"My teacher told me about sexual abuse and said that if I can be sexually abused I must call the police because that is a big issue in our village facing children, and that I must not let anyone touch me in ways that make me uncomfortable, especially by touching my breasts and private parts." **[P4 and 16]**

"Social Workers are the only ones who told us about sexual abuse and the actions that indicate sexual abuse and we should avoid and report the people who abuse us immediately it occurs." **[P3, 5 and 18]**

"Social Workers told me that sexual abuse is not good for us because if someone sexually abuses me, in that way he or she steals my childhood away from me because I do not understand the results of engaging in sexual intercourse with adults. My teacher also said that sexual abuse is when you fall in love with old people." **[P11]**

"My parents told me about sexual abuse. They said that sexual abuse is when someone touches me where I do not want and have sex with me without my permission. They told me that if someone sexually abuses me I should not be ashamed of myself to share with someone." **[P12, 13 and 17]**

Theme 3: Factors that Lead to adolescents being sexually abused in the Marshite Village

The researcher asked adolescents about factors that can lead to the adolescents being sexually abused in the Marshite village. This question on “factors that lead to adolescents being sexually abused in the Marshite village” was important to determine the adolescents’ understanding of the circumstances they live in and the extent to which the circumstances they live in contribute to them being sexually abused. The responses the adolescents’ provided are as follows:

Sub-Theme 1: Poverty and Parents Inability to Meet the Adolescents’ Basic Needs

“Adolescents are being sexually abused because they need money to survive and buy themselves nice things that our families cannot afford. We need the money to live a better life.” [P1, 6 and 13]

“Poverty and the need for money: Some families are unemployed and they force girls to go to the older men to get money for groceries in exchange for sex.” [P2, 10, 19 and 20]

“Some families are unemployed and when a girl does not have money but her friends have money to buy expensive things, she will want a man with a car and lot of money and at the end that man will force to sleep with her without her permission.” [P3, 8 and 15]

“Adolescents want to live a better live like their friends and they will do anything to get money like making themselves available to men who can help them even if they do not like what they do.” [P4, 5, 9 and 17]

“Families where parents do not take care of their children because of the clothes they wear and their behaviour. They can be abused because of lack of money to feet him/herself.” [P7 and 12]

“Sometimes we [adolescents] need some food to eat and clothes to wear and you tell yourself that if I can find a guy who is rich and fall in love with him, maybe he can give me some money to buy those things. This is the way we find ourselves being sexually abused in the Marshite village.” [P11 and 18]

According to Van Niekerk (2006:103), poverty contributes enormously to the sexual vulnerability of children. He further states that the absence of the child support grant for children older than 14 years was an iniquitous blight on family life for families who lived in poverty. Poverty, according to Evian (2006:21), is one of the factors for women, such as adolescent girls, who are often forced to sell sex to earn precious money for food and basic needs. He also mentioned that young girls may sell sex to older men just to earn money to survive financially.

Sub-Theme 2: Adolescents' Risky-Life Styles and Behaviours

Participant 14 mentioned the following:

“Adolescents should stop wearing mini-skirts, drinking alcohol, walking alone at night, to need money for sex with other people.”

Although only one participant mentioned this factor that lead to adolescents being sexually abused in the Marshite village, Spies (2006:57) mentioned by choosing a risky-life style such as sleeping with boys and girls, children such as adolescents attempt to give themselves a sense of being in control of their sexuality. These activities according to her may have other repercussions such as unwanted pregnancy or being sexually abused.

Sub-Theme 3: Sharing Sleeping Rooms Resulting from Over-Crowding

Overcrowding, according to Mahura (2013:17) and Rammala (2009:50), can play a role in the sexual behaviour of children and sexual crimes. In most homes in Marshite, family members have to share the minimal sleeping space with other the family members and friends. According to Thoman (2006:413), overcrowding households can present an opportunity for adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse.

One of the participants said the following:

“We live in a two-roomed house and sleep with my mother and step-father and when they have sex, I am able to hear them and I do not like it because it is not good for me mentally as I think of sex when I am with my friends.” [P16]

Theme 4: Prevention of sexual abuse

On the question: “How can adolescents prevent from being sexually abused in the Marshite village?” the researcher considered obtaining adolescents' inputs as

important in achieving adolescents' inclusion in researches that meant to improve their living conditions. By including adolescents in rural areas in finding how they can prevent from being sexually abused, the adolescents' become partners in preventing being sexually abused. The responses that the adolescents provided on the question of how they can prevent being sexually abused are the following:

Sub-Theme 1: Caregivers Teaching Adolescents about Sexual Abuse

According to Brooks (2008:8), parents' role is to nurture and protect children and to meet children's needs "because parents are assumed to have their children's best interest at heart." Primary caregivers, just as parents must have children who are in their care, best interest at heart. Caregivers therefore can play an important role in preventing the sexual abuse of a child but also in the supporting of the sexual abused child (Spies, 2006b:274).

"If parents can make homes safe for us and we have programmes that teach us about sexual abuse even in the village, we can be able to talk to our parents about sexual abuse if it happens to us." [P10]

"Another way we as adolescents can protect us from sexual abuse is if parents let us know what sexual abuse is because some adolescents do not know what actually it sexual abuse is." [P17]

Sub-Theme 2: Adolescents Abstinence from Using Substances

"Adolescents have to abstain from using drugs and there should be safety homes for children with no parents so that they could be safe." [P18]

The answers received from the adolescents indicated the adolescents' recognition and expectation of the role that parents and teachers should play in helping adolescents' prevent being sexually abused. According to the adolescents' responses, parents should communicate with their children about what sexual abuse involves; be able to identify situations that expose the children to sexual abuse, exercise appropriate supervision over the adolescents and have the knowledge to identify changes in behaviours of their children associated with sexual abuse. Participants 15 and 17 mentioned that:

“we cannot be able to protect ourselves from being sexually abused if our parents continue to neglect us and avoid telling us what sexual abuse is. We did not invite being sexually abuse, then the adults who abuses us should respect us.”

Theme 5: Persons to assist adolescents when they are sexually abused

The responses the researcher received from the adolescents' on a question of “who can assist adolescents when they are sexually abused” mentioned social workers and teachers. Social Workers' are considered by the adolescents as able to listen and talk to them with respect and understanding unlike their caregivers. The adolescents expressed the desire to have conversations with their caregivers on sexual matters but did not consider the caregivers as relevant persons to help adolescents when they are sexually abused. Participant 2 indicated that:

“They (caregivers) do not have time to listen and they are quick to judge and say we wanted it [sexual abuse] and if we did not want it we could have just denied.” [P2]

“Our teachers can help because I consider them our parents and they spend most of the time with us and teaching us of how we should live our lives and avoid dangerous situations.” [P6]

The ways in which the social workers and teachers are considered to be able to help adolescents when they are sexually abused differs. The adolescents' mentioned that social workers have knowledge of sexual abuse and by virtue of the knowledge they possess, they should work together with the teachers in helping adolescents' when they are sexually abused.

“Social Workers can help because they know much about sexual abuse and they are able to talk to boys and girls about sexual things because they were trained to help children who need help.” [P10]

“As they are able to talk to children in a way that the children feel accepted and valued, social workers can be helpful as we do not have someone we can talk to about sexual abuse.” [P3]

According to the responses received from participants 7 and 9, the availability of social worker's contact details to teachers and adolescents is important as that

allows the adolescents to seek help from the social workers when they are sexually abused. Regular visits to schools to present information to adolescents and teachers on sexual abuse were considered as an essential help to adolescents when they are sexually abused. In a research done by Delport (2010) regarding the role of the teacher in terms of reporting the sexual abuse of a child, she concluded that teachers play an important role in not only educating the child about sexual aspects but teachers also have a legal obligation to report the sexual abuse of a child.

On teachers as persons who can assist the adolescents when they are sexually abused, participant 5 indicated the limits with which the adolescents regard teachers as helpful when they are sexually abused.

“Teachers can help but when we inform them about being sexually abused, they often try to tell our parents and not the police and the parents do not report to the police but tell us never to tell anyone.” [P5]

“Teachers can help but we are not able to talk to them because they just do not understand how we feel because what interests them is that we achieve good grades.” [P8]

10.3 Data received from social workers

The researcher interviewed ten Sepedi-speaking social workers from the Department of Social Development and Child Welfare who render social work services in the Marshite area of the Limpopo Province. The social workers were delivering child care and protection service to children in the Marshite village and their families.

10.3.1 Identification particulars of the social workers

TABLE 3: GENDER AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS SOCIAL WORKER N=10

| Participant' | Years of experience | Gender |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| A | 06 | Female |
| B | 10 | Female |
| C | 04 | Male |

| | | |
|---|----|--------|
| D | 06 | Female |
| E | 10 | Male |
| F | 06 | Female |
| G | 04 | Male |
| H | 06 | Male |
| I | 04 | Female |
| J | 08 | Female |

The above table indicates that the ten social workers interviewed by the researcher were all experienced workers because they had between four to ten years of experience in social work. There were six (60%) female and four (40%) male social workers. They all have been practicing as generalist social workers with a focus on child care and child protection services.

10.3.2 Social workers' experiences regarding sexual abuse of adolescents

The researcher believed that obtaining social workers' experiences about what they know about sexual abuse is important to gain insights into adolescents' sexual abuse in the Marshite village.

Theme 1: Fear for discrimination and to be labelled

The participant's responses as social workers revealed the difficulties adolescents and their caregivers experience in speaking out about sexual abuse as abusers are mostly family members. The socio-cultural values to which the adolescents and their caregivers ought to abide by as part of their tradition, such as not speaking about sexual matters with children in the family, appeared to have an influence on the adolescents' lack of sufficient knowledge on sexual abuse. Participants D and G mentioned that:

“The perpetrators are family members and the abuse happening within such relationship is difficult to disclose and solve. In most instances, the abusers are the adolescents' fathers.’ The mothers of the adolescents' do show concern when they are made aware of the sexual abuse incidence but tends to protect both themselves and abuser by pretending that everything is alright and going well in the family.” [PD]

“The tradition of the Sepedi culture that bars children from discussing sexuality with caregivers appears to be prevalent in the rural area. As a result of these traditional values of never trusting and disclosing family matters to outsiders, children are taught to remain silent on matters and situations that are threatening and caregivers enforce this silence by not believing in the children when they are told of the possibility of sexual abuse involving the children.” [PG]

The participants experiences suggests that not only adolescents are taught to be loyal to caregivers who are likely to be sexually abusing them, but caregivers are hesitant also to report adolescent’s sexual abuses to social workers in fear of being stigmatised and labelled by fellow community members. The depth of emotional reactions caregivers’ experiences as a result of knowing about their adolescent children sexual abuse appeared to be an important factor influencing caregiver’s decision to speak out or keep quiet about the sexual abuse incidence. As participants B and E indicated,

“The children’s caregivers do not have the courage to speak out about the sexual abuses the children experience because they cannot come to imagine the negative stigmatisation that they will have to go through. I mean, women who speak out on these issues are belittled and called names ‘as being inadequate in bed’ which is quoted as the reason their husbands sexually abuse the children.” [PB]

“Parents’ of sexually abused adolescents’ feel embarrassed to bring the issue to Social Workers’ attention. Reporting the sexual abuse incidence is even more traumatic for them than not reporting for they receive no adequate professional assistance after reporting.” [PE]

In support of the participant E responses, the researcher noted that caregivers of sexually abused adolescents, as participant J mentioned, do not receive adequate services to cope with the effects of the sexual abuse to the child and the whole family.

“As social workers’ serving the area, we are very few and have to deal with all cases of different kinds, and when the children are referred to us, they only attend one or two sessions because we cannot manage

to deal with countless number of sexual abuse cases in our fewness.”

[PJ]

Fear of adolescents and caregivers to be labelled is an important factor why these people do not want to report cases of sexual abuse in the rural areas. This fear of stigmatization is experienced by boys as well as girls (Fontes & Plummer, 2010:498). Fear for stigmatisation and discrimination played an important role in the lives of adolescents in foster care affected by HIV and AIDS, according to Roux *et al.*, (2012:476-477), if someone should discover that a family member is infected with the virus. The same fear was experienced by adolescents according to social workers in the Marshite area if someone should discover that the adolescent was sexually abused.

Theme 2: Circumstances in which sexually abused adolescents live

As part of the rural village, adolescents and their caregivers are not independent of the influence their interactions with the family and community members may have on the behaviours (Sin, 2010:23). The influence and interactions that the adolescents and their caregivers have with their community and family may, as participants B indicated, contribute to adolescents' sexual abuse. The responses the researcher received from the social workers, as participants, suggested that most sexually abused adolescents they assess comes from single-parent and sibling-headed households; lives with substance-dependent parents and extended family members.

Sub-Theme 1: Impoverished Homes with Unemployed Single Parents

Participant A indicated that *“The children live in single parent and impoverished homes with a caregiver who is not employed and lacks sufficient income to meet his/her children's basic needs.”* The lack of employment opportunities in the Marshite area, as participant A noted, result in the families not having adequate means of livelihood and therefore depending on child support grants that the parents receive monthly for the needs of the children which in most of the time are insufficient. Moyo (2013:51-55) and Nkosi (2013:84) indicate that social security constitutes an important source of income for rural families, as no formal employment opportunities exist.

Sub-Theme 2: Child-Headed Households

Participant D mentioned that most caregivers living with HIV and AIDS in the Marshite village die of HIV and AIDS-related disease at the prime of their years while many of them are parents and these leave the children orphaned. These children are left with no alternative family members to care for them. According to participant H:

“These children live in unfortunate conditions and are deprived of adequate alternative care because the extended family members with whom the children are supposed to live with, most are in the Gauteng Province in search for job opportunities. The children are left to be on their own.” [PH]

According to Abdool Karim (2008:48) and Frohlich (2005:351), South Africa experienced one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics that steadily eroded the family which always has been the fundamental unit of any society. Because of the HIV epidemic many young adolescents are forced into premature parenting roles and thrusting upon them the responsibilities of caregiver and guardian (Frohlich, 2005:361). These situations lead to the possibility for the child or children to be sexually abused by members in the community or family.

Sub-Theme 3: Overcrowded Houses

Participants G and I also mentioned that the majority of the sexually abused adolescents they assess come from families with several members living together in mud houses and sharing sleeping rooms. The living conditions of these adolescents', as described by participant G indicated that the sleeping rooms with which the adolescents share with other family members, are in most instances without access control doors.

“The majority of the children live in overcrowded mud houses with no access control doors and perpetrators are able to have access to children in their sleep and sexually abuse them without being seen by none other than the child in most instances.” [PG]

Overcrowded households are a serious problem in the Marshite area and are likely to increase adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse. In the research done by Kotze *et al.* (2001), Motshedi (2009:40), Roux and Strydom (2011:326) and Van der

Westhuizen (2011:44) in the North-West Province, the households were anything from a brick house to any form of informal housing or a shack, and were normally over-crowded which have the disadvantage of causing a negative lifestyle.

Sub-Theme 4: Live with Extended Family Members and 'Move-In' Boyfriends

In some instances where caregivers are unable to provide in the basic and emotional needs of the children, arrangements are made with extended family members to care for and live with the children. Mothers who live with their boyfriend are one of the factors contributing to the sexual abuse of a child such as an adolescent. According to participants C, J and H:

"The children live in families where domestic violence is dormant and not reported. The chaos and conflicts that reigns in these families ends up encouraging the other caregiver to send the children to stay with their extended family members." [PC]

"In most instances, you find the children staying with parents living with illnesses such as mental disabilities or HIV and AIDS." [PJ]

"Many of the children live with their mothers 'move-in boyfriends." [PH]

Extended family members as caregivers play an important role in preventing the sexual abuse of a child but also in the supporting of the sexual abused child (Spies, 2006b:274). According to Faller (2007:167), a substantial number of children these days live in families with stepparents or with a parent or caregiver's new partner wherein these parents or caregivers play a major role in caring for the child and thus also preventing the child from being sexually abused.

Theme 3: Vulnerabilities exposing adolescents to sexual abuse

Social workers were asked what vulnerabilities, according to them, expose adolescents to sexual abuse. The answers that the researcher received from the social workers were the following:

Sub-Theme 1: Lack of Appropriate Caregiving Due to HIV/AIDS-Related Deaths

Participant A indicated that the rate of adults living with HIV and AIDS in the Marshite village is high. These adults who live with HIV and AIDS are mostly parents having children to care for and to protect. When they die as a result of HIV

and AIDS-related illnesses the children are either left with no caregiver or with extended families or left with grown-up children in child-headed households looking after their siblings. Without the protection and care of a mature adult in the household to exercise appropriate child supervision, the children become susceptible to sexual abuse by persons other family members and outsiders (Frohlich, 2005:361).

Participant G elaborated thus:

“Orphans whose parents’ died of HIV and AIDS-related illnesses are more at risk of sexual abuse. Without adults to care and protect them from sexual abuse, these children often find themselves falling prey to family members and neighbours who take the children’s situation to their advantage and sexually abuse them. Remember, they have no one to talk to when such incidents do occur.”

Sub-Theme 2: Parents’ Inability to Meet the Children’s Basic Needs Due To Lack of Income and Unemployment

“This village is very poor. You can see from the life of impoverishment that the children and their parents live in. Because the parents’ cannot afford to ensure that their children’s needs for food and pocket money are met, the adolescents’ tend to look for ways of meeting their needs. Some of these ways include consenting to sexual advances some of their financially well-to-do extended family members make. In some instances, the adolescents’ even initiate these sexual advances as they perceive their actions as the only way to solicit for assistance from their extended families. It is amazing that the very same money they get in return for sexual favours, they even use it to assist with purchasing food in their primary families.” [PB]

In describing the vulnerabilities exposing adolescents to sexual abuse, participants A and C mentioned parental substance-dependency and inability to meet their children’s basic needs as contributing factors. Participant D elaborated that:

“...young mothers’ abuse alcohol in this village. They neglect their adolescent children and given that the children are without proper supervision, outsiders [persons not related to them] are able to have

access to these children, give them food and material things with intention of luring the children to engage in sexual acts with them.”

Participant A indicated that living in impoverished conditions renders the adolescents' vulnerable to sexual abuse.

“Parents are without money and these adolescents have expectations similar to other adolescents for having nice things. When they become aware of their parents situation (inability to provide for their basic needs) they are likely to make themselves available to being sexually abused in expectation of money. If they do not report the abuses they would have another opportunity to receive the money they are frequently offered as a result for their compliance and submissiveness to sexual abuse activities.” [PC]

Poverty and low-socio-income conditions have not only an influence on the spreading of HIV and AIDS but it has also an influence women forced to sell sex to earn money for a living (Evian, 2006:21). Poverty is one of the broad societal factors that contribute enormously to the vulnerability of children, such as adolescents, to be sexually abused (Van Niekerk, 2006:103).

Sub-Theme 3: Men's Perceptions of Sexual Intercourse with Adolescents

According to participant C, the perceptions that grown-up men have in the rural area of Marshite village about engaging in sexual intercourse with adolescents, places the children at disadvantage. From the cases that the participant dealt with involving sexual abuse of adolescents, she realized that most men in the community think that having sex with an adolescent can improve their sexual abilities or cure HIV infection. This is so because they perceive the adolescents as fresh-bloods and never touched. The perception of grown-up men that adolescents are a good remedy for improving sexual capabilities is not accepted by many women in the community. **[PC]** The HIV and AIDS pandemic, according to Van Niekerk (2006:103), and the myths that accompany it, have also contributed to the vulnerability of children to be sexually abused.

Sub-Theme 4: Lack of Adequate Shelter and Children Sharing Bedrooms with Step-Parents

“Many of the families’ in this village have a number of children ranging from four to eight. The children have no separate sleeping rooms and as a result, the children have to share the sleeping space with the parents or caregivers. They have no option and some parents have sexual intercourse in the children’s presence but in their sleep thinking the children are no able to hear anything. This predisposes the children to unintentional sexual preparedness by some of the parents who may be step-fathers in the children’s mother’s absence the child will take over and satisfy the step-father sexually.” [PD and I]

According to Zastrow (2008:203), the largest proportion of incest cases reported to the police, the sexual abuse was between father or step-father and daughter. In most cases the abuse occurs in the child’s home and never reported. This was also the case Fontaine (1991:128) experienced in 1990/1991.

Sub-Theme 5: Parents’ Inability to Recognize Signs of Sexual Abuse and to Report It

“The inability of the caregivers’ to recognize earlier signs of sexual abuse makes it possible for the abuser to continue abusing the child with limited fear of being caught. In situations where caregivers became suspicious, their limited understanding of what sexual abuse constitute and the need to keep their own families intact decide to overlook the occurrence of the sexual abuse.” [PE]

Children are most unlikely to report sexual abuse because they have loyalties towards the father or step-father and realistically fear the consequences for themselves, the abuser and the family (Zastrow, 2008:203). Many sexually abused children also never disclose, especially when the abuser is the father or step-father because “they are silenced by threats, blame and bribery” (Fouché, 2006:211).

Sub-Theme 6: Caregivers’ Consistent Absence due to Search for Employment

“The majority of the families in the Marshite village have numerous children born of young unwed parents. As they are in the prime of their years and hoping for a better future, the caregivers’ neglect the

children as they move from location to another in search for jobs. However, some of the children are deliberately neglected by their mothers' during weekends as they leave them with their elderly and frail grandparents while they go on drinking errands. As the children's grandparents are physically weary to appropriately look after the children, the situation becomes ideal for abusers to sexually abuse them as no one may discover given that most of the families cannot even afford to take the children suspected of being sexually abused to the hospital as it is almost thirty kilometers away and the clinic operates only during the day hours." [PF and J]

In the research done by Nqaphi (2013:20-21; 30-31) in the rural areas of the Queenstown district, the children as well as the social workers mentioned that the home is in most cases the place where children are sexually abused and mostly in the absence of the parents or caregivers. According to Levelson and Morin (2001:23), children living in a home where they are unsupervised - for example, the situation wherein the caregivers search for jobs - the likelihood of sexual abuse of those children should be considered as a high risk.

Sub-Theme 7: Lack of Communication about Child Sexuality

The nature of relationships that caregivers have with their adolescents, as participant H mentioned, exposes the adolescents to being sexually abuse.

"They are reluctant to talk to their adolescent children about sexuality as they do not have culturally-sensitive ways through which they could introduce the topic to their children. These caregivers uses the relationships they had with their parents regarding no conversation about sexuality as frame of reference for not feeling free to introduce the topic to their children," remarked participant H.

In support of the view that lack of open conversations about sexuality between caregivers and adolescents contribute to adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse participant I mentioned that *"The children are not able to talk to their caregivers about sexual matters. They consider their fathers not understanding about sexual abuse."*

According to Nqaphi (2013), Sanderson (2005:34) and Wass (2014), the best way for parents and caregivers to protect children from sexual abuse is to educate themselves as well as the children about topics such as sex and sexual abuse. The answers of the respondents in this research, correlates with the answers Nqaphi (2013:27) received in his research, namely, that sexual abuse of children happened because parents and caregiver do not talk about sex with their children.

Theme 4: Services social workers render to sexually abused adolescents

On the question of services rendered to sexually abused adolescents' and their families, participants as social workers reported their experiences of the services they render to sexually abused adolescents and their families. The different responses, below, indicated that the services social workers render to sexually abused adolescents and their families include counselling, life-skills and parenting education. The purpose at the centre of these services is to enable the adolescents and their families to cope with the trauma of the sexual abuse. The responses that participants D, H and J provided indicated that counselling services are rendered to the sexually abused adolescents and their families in response to the physical problems, cognitive disturbances, problems with sexuality and negative sense of self that the adolescents' experience as a result to being sexually abused.

"We provide counselling to the children and their families. The counselling services are rendered to help the families come into terms with the sexual abuse incidence. Counselling is provided to the adolescent child and the family so that they could feel supported in their ordeal and be able to cope with the situation that befallen them."

[PD]

"We provide life-skills and parenting skills programmes as prevention strategies aimed at helping adolescents' and their families deal with and curb incidences of adolescents' sexual abuse in the area."

[PH and J]

Although these participants responses mentions the services rendered to sexually abused adolescents and their families, participants F and I expressed their dissatisfaction with the efficacy of the services social workers render to sexually abused adolescents and their families. Lack of organisational guidelines on how to

deal with the challenges posed by adolescents' sexual abuse, inadequate training social workers received on assessment of sexually abused children, and minimal efforts social work managers give to sexual abuse cases appears to have influenced social workers abilities towards rendering quality services to sexually abused adolescents and their families.

"It is unfortunate that the organisation does not have appropriate guidelines on how to deal with the challenges posed by sexual abuse of adolescents. We are not even trained on these matters as the managers are failing to realise that minimal effort and attention is given to combating sexual abuse of adolescent children who are already at risk as we speak." [PF]

"Honestly, our organisation is not doing enough to assist sexually abused adolescents and their families. Who knows about the services they need, especially in the rural area of Marshite's ilk? We did not receive any training specifically focusing on helping sexually abused adolescents and their families in undergraduate years at the university and the department makes no provisions for workshops or any other relevant training to enhance our skills. But just tell me, who will expect us to do a wonderful job while there are so many children being sexually abused today and we are only few?" [PI]

Grabe (2013:449) mentions that the services rendered to sexually abused children should include psychological, social, medical and legal services. This is so because child sexual abuse is punishable by law (Minnie, 2009:89) and investigations into reported sexual abuse allegations by social workers is necessary. Wurtele (2009:3) further mentions that adolescents' exposure to sexual abuse has the potential to result in the child's negative sense of self, disrupted sexual development and sexualized behaviours. As a result, services rendered to sexually abused adolescents and their families should be aimed at helping caregivers protect their children from sexual abuse by knowing what it entails and how to be able to tell when a child is being sexually abused; enabling children become aware while in sexual abuse situations, refusing sexual advances and encouraging reporting of sexual abuse (Fouché, 2012:77).

Theme 5: Ways of preventing sexual abuse of adolescents in the Marshite Village

Empowering adolescents and their caregivers on how to prevent sexual abuse is essential to developing programmes aimed at reducing child sexual abuse. According to Daro (2003:3), preventing sexual abuse of children requires educating children on sexual abuse and how to respond when they are abused. Wurtele (2009:4) mentions that teaching children on how to identify potentially abusive situations and disclose sexual abuse earlier should be at the centre of programmes aimed at preventing child sexual abuse. With the question on how sexual abuse of adolescents in the Marshite village can be prevented or reduced, the researcher received the following responses:

“Awareness campaigns on prevention of sexual abuse can be very useful in disseminating information to parents and families on how to prevent sexual abuse. The rural people need to be given sufficient information on what is sexual abuse and its consequences on the children it affect. Social Workers, police officials and tribal authorities must collaborate in undertaking community-wide prevention campaigns if sexual abuse of adolescents’ is to be prevented in this rural village.” [PA]

“The prevention strategy that includes family-risk assessments and proactive family interventions are important because the issue of sexual abuse of adolescents’ happens more likely in families that experience parental crises.” [PB]

Participants A and B’s responses appeared to represent recognition amongst social workers of the role that families, police officials and tribal authorities can play in preventing or reducing adolescents’ sexual abuse in the village Marshite. In support of the role families, police officials and tribal authorities can play in preventing or reducing adolescents’ sexual abuse, participants F and J mentioned that caregivers should exercise adequate supervision over the adolescents, have candid conversations with them about sexual abuse and learn more on how to prevent sexual abuse. Social Workers must acquire skills on working with sexually abused adolescents’ and their families and conduct awareness campaigns that targets

adolescents and teach them on how to identify potentially sexual abusive behaviours. The importance of acquiring sufficient knowledge and skills on helping sexually abused adolescents is recognised by Aucamp *et al.*, (2012:9) and Van Graan (2012:35). Aucamp *et al.*, (2012:9) and Van Graan (2012:35) mention that police officials and Social Workers must continuously undergo training course to capacitate themselves with skills on how to receive and investigate cases of sexual abuse and provide needed socio-behavioural care to families of children affected. Participant C indicates that:

“I would not even want to handle such a case and later become an embarrassment in court when I had to be exposed to the cross-examination. Look at how many cases of sexual abuse of children have not been adequately prosecuted in this village. Many. So, let the department train people and even give scholarships to people like yourself who will come and help. But it is unfortunate they are not seeing the conditions under which the children and caregivers live in.”

The tribal authorities should work together with educators on changing the attitudes and behaviours of adults and young men towards engaging in sexual acts with the children as a way of invigorating their sexual prowess. In supporting this, Masehela and Pillay (2014:22) indicates that educators should not remain silent on the issue of sexual abuse as with the effective use of their teaching skills most children can reveal their experiences of sexual abuse which teachers must take it upon them to report to relevant officials.

“The adults, themselves, should be educated of the importance of protecting the children. If campaigns are conducted, they should target the attitudes and behaviours of adults who engage in such acts with the children. The problem lies in this type of men’s sexuality. I do not think a sensible man could really use a child in satisfying his sexual needs. So, let community-wide counselling sessions and dialogues be conducted to change these men’s attitudes towards sexuality.” [PF]

“Changing these men’s perceptions that have sexual intercourse with adolescents help invigorate their sexual prowess is important because

other young boys grow up believing these myths and this increase young girls' vulnerability to sexual abuse.” [PG]

With responses received from the participants D and E, the researcher noted that encouraging children to gain the courage to speak out about their experiences of sexual abuse and sharing their experiences and letting others know that they are not alone was considered important in preventing or reducing adolescents' sexual abuse. The ability of the adolescents to speak out about sexual abuse, as participant H mentioned, would encourage caregivers to talk about sexual abuse matters in the community and request professional help when reports of adolescents' sexual abuse emerge.

Participant H commented that:

“Caregivers of sexually abused adolescents often think they, as a family, can solve the problem when it arises and need no professional help. This results in most caregivers deciding to sweep the issue under the carpet in fear of losing the family members with whom they have established bonds as a result of the sexual abuse incident. Thus, the messages caregivers' receives about sexual abuse as an issue not to be talked about should be target by establishing women support group against sexual abuse of adolescents in this village. ”

11 RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATIONS

The results obtained from this study indicated that incidences of adolescents' sexual abuse are on the increase in the Marshite village. In the village Marshite, caregivers seldom engage in positive discussions with their children about sexual abuse. The caregivers regard having such conversation about sexual abuse with children as 'un-cultural' and likely to prompt children to participate in sexual activities and provide them with age inappropriate sexual knowledge. The fear of the trauma and labelling that most caregivers go through as a result of speaking out about adolescents' sexual abuse and the embarrassment they experience, result in caregivers deciding not to speak out.

The circumstances that contributed to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse, as derived from the adolescents' and social workers' answers, indicated the following:

- Caregivers and adolescents lack sufficient knowledge about sexual abuse and behaviours that are sexually abusive to children.
- Caregivers distant their relationships with adolescents and lack communication with adolescents on child sexuality.
- Village men have the perception that having sexual intercourse with an adolescent helps invigorate their sexual prowess.
- Caregivers attempt to solve the issue as a family hence they do not informing relevant professionals to intervene.
- Lack of adequate shelter and children sharing bedrooms with step-parents cause, in some cases, sexual abuse of children.

It was observed during this study that the adolescents' knowledge of sexual abuse is limited. This could be attributed to the lack of discussions, especially in the home regarding sexual abuse and child sexuality as a result of the tradition within which the children and caregivers live, which bars discussions of sexual matters with children. The researcher observed that the adolescents desired to have conversations with their caregivers on sexual abuse but could not regard them as persons to help them when they are sexually abused. The caregivers were regarded as such because of their lack of knowledge and neutrality when sexual abuse matters are discussed. They are quicker to blame the adolescents for the sexual abuse incidence rather than listening and understanding the children's experience in order to help and prevent occurrence of the child sexual abuse.

Social workers as participants indicated the significance of acquiring knowledge and skills in rendering services to sexually abused adolescents and their families. The observations the researcher made with regard to services delivery to sexually abused adolescents and their families is that, no coherent and clearly defined basket of services is provided. There are no guidelines on what services to render and what service is important to the sexually abused adolescents and their caregivers. Counselling appeared to be the type of services rendered to the sexually abused adolescents and their families and the aim is to enable the adolescents and their families to cope with the trauma resulting from the sexual

abuse incidence. Although there is recognition among the social workers of their role in investigating sexual-abuse cases reported to their offices, the fear of going through the court processes as an 'expert witness' with no specialised knowledge and skills of investigating sexual abuse cases, explained the social workers' reluctance to be involved.

The social workers mentioned that the efficacy of their services to sexually abused adolescents and their families could be enhanced by the social workers receiving intensive training on sexual abuse, attending workshops on sexual abuse regularly and being provided with guidelines on what services are to be provided to sexually abused adolescents and their families. The Department of Social Development, social workers, teachers and tribal authority were mentioned as persons who can work together in assisting adolescents and prevent as well as reduce sexual abuse in the Marshite village. Well trained social workers with knowledge about forensic social work would greatly add value to the protection of sexually abused adolescents. The development of programmes aimed at empowering adolescents and caregivers on what sexual abuse is and how it can be prevented would help to reduce the amount of child sexual abuse cases in the Marshite village.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings obtained in this research study, the following recommendations are made:

- Incorporation into the school curriculum study units designed to educate adolescents on how to recognize inappropriate sexual behaviours and encouraged adolescents to disclose abusive behaviours earlier.
- Regular monitoring of case reports conducted by social work managers to enhance the development of rural community-based responses and awareness of adolescents' sexual abuse.
- The Department of Social Development in the Limpopo Province has to develop guidelines for coordinated multidisciplinary training interventions for social workers and police officials in the Forensic Child Protection Units.
- Culturally-relevant programmes that educate caregivers how to communicate with their children in a rural area about sex and sexual abuse.

13 CONCLUSIONS

Adolescents in the rural area of Marshite are vulnerable to sexual abuse. The circumstances of the adolescents are characterised by: limited supervision, inadequate housing, adolescents' experimenting with substances, overcrowded households and sharing sleeping arrangements with older extended family members. These circumstances increase the adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse. Adolescents in this research study have limited understanding of sexually abusive behaviours. There is a therefore need for prevention programmes about sexual abuse. These programmes must also be available to schools and caregivers. The lack of specific multidisciplinary programmes on preventing sexual abuse in Marshite and the lack of social workers with adequate formal training on sexual abuse, increases the adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1: PERMISSION FROM THE HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICAL COMMITTEE OF THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY[®]
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
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Faculty of Health Sciences
Tel: 018-299 2092
Fax: 018-299 2088
Email: Minrie.Greeff@nwu.ac.za

13 October 2014

Dear Dr AA Roux

Ethics Application: NWU-00027-09-A1 "The development and evaluation of programs and a protocol in Forensic Social Work"

Your application to include the sub-study, entitled "Circumstances contributing to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in a rural area" has been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee for inclusion under the umbrella project until 30/06/2015.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Minrie Greeff'.

Prof Minrie Greeff
Health Research Ethics Committee
Chairperson

Original details: Prof Minrie Greeff(10187308) C:\Users\13210572\Documents\ETIEK\2009 ETHICS\NW U-00037-09-A1 (AA Roux-MN Mamabolo) - Approval letter.docm 13 October 2014

File reference: 9.1.5.3

ANNEXURE 2: PERMISSION FROM THE VILLAGE HEAD

RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE VILLAGE HEADMAN

Enquiries: MR. MPHAHLELE PERANE
Tribal Authority: MPHAHLELE [BAKGAGA]
Physical Address: MASHITE VILLAGE
CA - MPHAHLELE
0736
Contact Details: 0826769762



RE: Research approval letter for Mr. Mamabolo M.N research study

- As the aforementioned matter refers.
- I, the Mashite village headman under the Bakgaga Ba-Mphahlele hereby attest that I permitted Mr. Mamabolo Marumo Nyabane (MN) the village Social Worker to conduct his study on "*Circumstances contributing towards adolescents' vulnerability to sexual abuse in a rural*" in our village. We have permitted him to use the adolescents' with whom consent was obtained from their parents as part of his research.
- He is a well-renowned Social Worker who began rendering Social Work services to our low-income community on the 31st of March 2014.

Signature:  (Headman)
Date: 09/10/2014



ANNEXURE 3: PERMISSION FROM THE SENIOR MANAGER DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

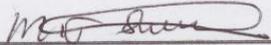
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Confidential

Ref : S5/3/1/2
Enq : Ledwaba MS
Tel : 015 293 6466
Date : 24 October 2014
TO : Mr Mamabolo MN

RESPONSE ON THE REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY TITLED "CIRCUMSTANCES CONTRIBUTING TO ADOLESCENTS VULNERABILITY TOWARDS SEXUAL ABUSE IN A RURAL AREA

1. The Department received your request dated, **18 June 2014** and acknowledge receipt thereof.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that, permission to conduct above-mentioned research study **has been granted** by the Research Committee.
3. In the spirit of lifelong learning, the Department wishes you the best in conducting your research study.



**SENIOR MANAGER: HUMAN CAPITAL
DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY**

27/10/2014

DATE

18 College Street, Polokwane, 0700, Private Bag x9710, POLOKWANE,
Tel: (015) 293 6027, Fax (015) 293 6211/ 20 Website: <http://www.limpopo.gov.za>

The heartland of Southern Africa – *development is about people*

ANNEXURE 4: WRITTEN CONSENT FROM ADOLESCENT'S CAREGIVER

RESEARCH TITLE: Circumstances Contributing To Adolescents' Vulnerability towards Sexual Abuse in a Rural Area
RESEARCHER: Marumo Nyabane Mamabolo, MA Social Work (Forensic Practice) student
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Adrie Roux
CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof Cornelia Wessels

DECLARATION:

I,.....hereby confirm that I voluntarily accept and give permission for my adolescent child to participate in the study. I have been informed by the researcher that the child can withdraw from the study at any time without facing any punishment.

I grant the researcher the permission to audio-record the interviews conducted with the child and understand that the audio-records and transcripts of the interviews will be available to the researcher team that includes the researcher and the study leader and be kept safe at the Social Work Division of the North-West University at the Potchefstroom Campus for five years.

I agree that the researcher informed me about the following aspects:

Purpose: To identify circumstances that contributes to the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse in the rural area Marshite in order to enable social workers to empower adolescents and parents with knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse in this area.

Procedures: Ethical clearance certificate (NWU-00027-09-A1) was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University at the Potchefstroom Campus. Permission was obtained from the District Social Work Manager and Social Work Supervisor from Department of Social Development, Women, Children and Persons' living with disability. The tribal authority (headman) in the Marshite area gave permission for the researcher to conduct the study in the area. Information from the participants will be obtained by use of semi-structured one to one interviews and the interviews will be audio-recorded.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The researcher abides by the ethical code of the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) and North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC) to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of participants. The results of the study will be published in a professional journal and no information regarding the identifying details of the participants will be revealed during the publication of the study results.

Risk: Participation in the study is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time during the process.

Possible advantages: The study will be beneficial to the Social Workers, adolescents' parents and the Department of Social Development, Women, Children and Persons' living with disability as the findings will assist in the development and evaluation of programs aimed at empowering adolescents' and caregivers with knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse in the Marshite area.

SIGNATURES:

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| PARENT/S | DATE | PLACE |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|
| RESEARCHER | DATE | PLACE |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|

| | | |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| WITNESS | DATE | PLACE |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|

ANNEXURE 5: WRITTEN ASSENT BY THE ADOLESCENT

RESEARCH TITLE: Circumstances Contributing To Adolescents' Vulnerability towards Sexual Abuse in a Rural Area
RESEARCHER: Marumo Nyabane Mamabolo, MA Social Work (Forensic Practice) student
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Adrie Roux
CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof Cornelia Wessels

DECLARATION:

I,.....hereby confirm that I voluntarily accept and give permission to participate in the study. I have been informed by the researcher that I can withdraw from the study at any time without facing any punishment. I permit the researcher to audio-record the interviews and understand that the audio-recordings and transcripts of the interviews will be available to the research team, which includes the researcher and the study leader, and be kept safe at the Social Work Division of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, for five years.

I agree that the researcher informed me about the following aspects:

Purpose: To identify circumstances that contribute to the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse in the rural area Marshite in order to enable social workers to empower adolescents and parents with knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse in this area.

Procedures: Ethical clearance certificate (NWU-00027-09-A1) was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University at the Potchefstroom Campus. Permission was obtained from the District Social Work Manager and Social Work Supervisor from Department of Social Development, Women, Children and Persons' living with disability. The tribal authority (headman) in the Marshite area gave permission for the researcher to conduct the study in the area. Information from the participants will be obtained by use of semi-structured one to one interviews and the interviews will be audio-recorded.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The researcher abides by the ethical code of the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) and North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC) to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of participants. The results of the study will be published in a professional journal and no information regarding the identifying details of the participants will be revealed during the publication of the study results.

Risk: Participation in the study is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time during the process.

Possible advantages: The study will be beneficial to the Social Workers', adolescents' parents and the Department of Social Development, Women, Children and Persons' living with disability as the findings will assist in the development and evaluation of programs aimed at empowering adolescents' and caregivers with knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse in the Marshite area.

SIGNATURES:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| ADOLESCENT CHILD | DATE | PLACE |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|
| RESEARCHER | DATE | PLACE |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|

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|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| WITNESS | DATE | PLACE |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|

ANNEXURE 6: WRITTEN CONSENT BY THE SOCIAL WORKER

RESEARCH TITLE: Circumstances Contributing To Adolescents' Vulnerability towards Sexual Abuse in a Rural Area
RESEARCHER: Marumo Nyabane Mamabolo, MA Social Work (Forensic Practice) student
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Adrie Roux
CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof Cornelia Wessels

DECLARATION:

I,.....hereby confirm that I voluntarily accept and give permission to participate in the study. I have been informed by the researcher that I can withdraw from the study at any time without facing any punishment.

I permit the researcher to audio-record the interviews and understand that the audio-recordings and transcripts of the interviews will be available to the research team, which includes the researcher and the study leader, and shall be kept safe at the Social Work Division of the North-West University at the Potchefstroom Campus for five years.

I agree that the researcher informed me about the following aspects:

Purpose: To identify circumstances that contributes to the vulnerability of adolescents towards sexual abuse in the rural area Marshite in order to enable social workers to empower adolescents and parents with knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse in this area.

Procedures: Ethical clearance certificate (NWU-00027-09-A1) was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University at the Potchefstroom Campus. Permission was obtained from the District Social Work Manager and Social Work Supervisor from Department of Social Development, Women, Children and Persons' living with disability. The tribal authority (headman) in the Marshite area gave permission for the researcher to conduct the study in the area. Information from the participants will be obtained by use of semi-structured one to one interviews and the interviews will be audio-recorded.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The researcher abides by the ethical code of the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) and North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC) to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of participants. The results of the study will be published in a professional journal and no information regarding the identifying details of the participants will be revealed during the publication of the study results.

Risk: Participation in the study is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time during the process.

Possible advantages: The study will be beneficial to the Social Workers', adolescents' parents and the Department of Social Development, Women, Children and Persons' living with disability as the findings will assist in the development and evaluation of programs aimed at empowering adolescents' and caregivers with knowledge on how to prevent sexual abuse in the Marshite area.

SIGNATURES:

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| SOCIAL WORKER | DATE | PLACE |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------|

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|
| RESEARCHER | DATE | PLACE |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|

| | | |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| WITNESS | DATE | PLACE |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|

ANNEXURE 7: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH SOCIAL WORKERS

RESEARCH TITLE: Circumstances Contributing To Adolescents' Vulnerability towards Sexual Abuse in a Rural Area

INTRODUCTION

- The Social Worker, Mr. M.N Mamabolo is conducting a research project to investigate the circumstances contributing to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in a rural area in the Marshite village.
- The research project aims to identify circumstances contributing to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in the rural area in order to empower adolescents' and caregivers on how to prevent sexual abuse in the Marshite; village.
- The results obtained from the research project will also be used in the development and evaluation of programs and services rendered by Social Workers towards helping adolescents' and their caregivers prevent sexual abuse in the area.
- The results of the research project shall be used by the Social Worker MN Mamabolo as part of the requirements for the fulfillment of his Master's degree in Social Work (Forensic Practice) at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus.
- Thank you for your participation, time and co-operation. Your honest opinions are much appreciated.

Please feel free to respond to the questions that follow and remember that your honest opinions are valued and there is no right or wrong answer.

1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- **Gender:**

| | | | |
|------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Male | <input type="checkbox"/> | Female | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|

- How many years have you been practicing as a social worker?

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2. Provide a explanation of your experience as a social worker regarding the sexual abuse of adolescents in the Marshite village.

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6. How can the sexual abuse of adolescents in the Marshite village be prevented or reduced?

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Thank you very much for participating in this study.

Mr. MN. Mamabolo
Master's degree student in Social Work (Forensic Practice)
Social Worker: Department of Social Development, Women, Children and Persons' living with disability

ANNEXURE 8: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH ADOLESCENT CHILD

RESEARCH TITLE: Circumstances Contributing To Adolescents' Vulnerability towards Sexual Abuse in a Rural Area

INTRODUCTION

- The Social Worker, Mr. M.N Mamabolo is conducting a research project to investigate the circumstances contributing to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in a rural area in the Marshite village.
- The research project aims to identify circumstances contributing to adolescents' vulnerability towards sexual abuse in the rural area in order to empower adolescents' and caregivers on how to prevent sexual abuse in the Marshite village.
- The results obtained from the research project will also be used in the development and evaluation of programs and services rendered by Social Workers towards helping adolescents' and their caregivers prevent sexual abuse in the area.
- The results of the research project shall be used by the Social Worker MN Mamabolo as part of the requirements for the fulfillment of his Master's degree in Social Work (Forensic Practice) at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus.
- Thank you for your participation, time and co-operation. Your honest opinions are much appreciated.

Please feel free to respond to the questions that follow and remember that your honest opinions are valued and there is no right or wrong answer.

1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gender

| | | | |
|------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Male | <input type="checkbox"/> | Female | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|

How old are you?

Where do you live?

2. What do you understand by sexual abuse?

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3. Who told you about sexual abuse?

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4. What factors, according to you, lead to adolescents being sexually abused in your community?

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5. How can adolescents prevent being sexually abused in the Marshite village?

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6. Who can assist adolescents when they are sexually abused?

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Thank you very much for participating in this study.

Mr. MN. Mamabolo
Master's degree student in Social Work (Forensic Practice)
Social Worker: Department of Social Development, Women, Children and Persons'
living with disability

ANNEXURE 9: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

MM Mohlake
Centre for Academic Excellence
University of Limpopo
Turfloop Campus
Private Bag x 1106
Sovenga
0727

26 November 2014

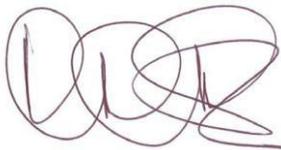
To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is meant to acknowledge that I, MM Mohlake, as a professional editor, have meticulously edited the dissertation of Mr M.N Mamabolo (24534757) entitled "Circumstances Contributing to Adolescents' Vulnerability towards Sexual Abuse in a Rural Area".

Thus I confirm that the readability of the work in question is of a high standard.

For any queries please contact me.

Regards



MM Mohlake
(015) 268 2707
072 1944 452
<mosimanentsile.mohlake@ul.ac.za>