The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Social Work in Forensic Practice at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

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August 2014
Acknowledgement

Let me take this opportunity and thank God Almighty for making this project successful.

I would like to express my gratitude to the following people:

- My study leader Doctor AA Roux for always being there for me, giving guidance and support during the research process up to the last time of the compilation of this article and my co-study leader Professor CC Wessels.

- The department of Social Development and SOS children’s village for their permission during data collection.

- My family for their support and encouragement during this period.

My colleagues for their encouragement and support especially to the late Fundiswa Mzingelwa who was so determined about the future.
Statement

I, Nomakubenje Agnes Ncanywa hereby state that the manuscript entitled:

The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse
of orphans in a rural area

is my own work.

........................................... ...........................................
N.A. Ncanywa Date
Summary

TITLE: The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area

Key words: Children, orphans, rural areas, sexual abuse, vulnerable

Sexual abuse of children is a major problem in South Africa. There is an increasing number of orphans in urban but also in rural areas of children and orphans who are sexually abused. The researcher experienced in her daily work as social worker in the rural area of the Oliver Tambo district Municipality children and orphans who are sexually abused.

The aim of this study is to identify the risks factors contributing to the vulnerability of orphans towards sexual abuse. Purposive sampling was conducted among social workers who have experience with orphans who were sexually abused in the Ngqeleni and Port St Johns areas of the Oliver Tambo District in the Eastern Cape. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher with the social workers as well as document analysis from the files of orphans who were sexually abused from the caseloads of these social workers.

From the data received it has been confirmed that family members where orphans grew up fail often to accept and to treat them like their own children, especially when they are not sharing the same clan name with the children. Orphans do not always get full support and protection like other children in the family. This situation makes it even more difficult for them to talk freely about their challenges. Lack of knowledge also plays a role to these children as they fail to report to government departments and community leaders.

Looking at the vulnerability of orphans in the Oliver Tambo District, there is a definite need for social workers to empower orphans and their caregivers with knowledge in preventing orphans from being sexually abused. There is also a need for forensic social workers to help with the assessment of orphans who are sexually abused in order to assure more successful prosecutions of alleged perpetrators.
Opsomming

**TITEL:** Die identifisering van faktore wat tot die kwetsbaarheid van weeskinders se seksuele misdaad in landelike gebiede bydra

**SLEUTELTERME:** Kinders, kwetsbaarheid, landelike gebied, seksuele misbruik, weeskind

Seksuele misbruik van kinders is ’n toenemende probleem in Suid-Afrika. Daar is ’n toename van weeskinders in stedelike asook in landelike gebiede wat seksueel misbruik word. Hierdie situasie ervaar die navorser ook in haar daaglikse werk as maatskaplike werker in die Oliver Tambo distrik Munisipaliteit.

Die doel met hierdie studie is om risiko faktore wat tot die kwetsbaarheid van weeskinders ten opsigte van seksuele misbruik te identifiseer. Doelgerigte steekproeftrekking is van gebruik gemaak ten opsigte van maatskaplike werkers wat ervaring in seksuele molestering van weeskinders in die Nggeleni en Port St Johns areas van die Oliver Tambo Distrik van die Oos Kaap, het. Semi-gestrukturereerde onderhoude is gevoer met maatskaplike werkers, asook dokument analyses van die lèers van seksueel misbruikte weeskinders op die gevalleladings van maatskaplike werkers.

Van die data ontvang is bevestiging gekry dat gesinslede waar weeskinders versorg word, dikwels misluk om hierdie kinders te aanvaar en te hanteer soos hulle eie kinders, veral as hulle nie van dieselfde stamgroep is nie. Weeskinders kry nie altyd dieselfde ondersteuning en beskerming as die ander kinders in die gesin nie. Hierdie situasie maak dit selfs moeiliker vir hulle om openhartig oor die uitdagings wat hulle ervaar te praat. ’n Gebrek aan kennis speel ook ’n rol by hierdie kinders aangesien hulle nie daarin slaag om die misbruik by staatsdepartemente of gemeenskap leiers aan te meld nie.

As daar na die kwetsbaarheid van weeskinders in die Oliver Tambo Distrik gekyk word, is daar ’n besliste behoefte vir maatskaplike werkers om weeskinders en hulle versorgers te bemagtig met kennis hoe om seksuele misbruik te voorkom. Daar is verder ’n behoefte vir forensiese maatskaplike werkers om met die assessering van
seksueel misbruikte weeskinders te help om sodoende te verseker dat meer suksesvolle vervolgings van beweerde oortreders sal geskied.
Foreword

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

The article complies out 60 credits from a total of 188 credits of the MA Social Work: Forensic Practice.
Instructions to the authors

SOCIAL WORK/MAATSKAPLIKE WERK

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 or Afrikaans. 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 ACSII. Manuscripts must be typed, double spaced on the 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, e.g. “…” (Berger, 1976:12). 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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The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area

Ms. NA Ncanywa, Master student in Social Work: Forensic Practice at North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus

Dr. AA Roux, Supervisor: North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus

Prof. CC Wessels: Co-Study leader: North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Davis et al. (2006:1) state that the death of parents from HIV and AIDS is far by the largest contributor to the problem of orphans in South Africa. As a leading cause of adult mortality due to HIV and AIDS “the epidemic has led to many children becoming orphans worldwide (Nziyane & Alpaslan, 2012:290). Children whose parents have died of HIV and AIDS are often left to be cared for by their relatives, including grandparents and other care structures such as foster homes, orphanages and child-headed households. According to Roux et al. (2010:43) children such as orphans in foster care are in most cases made vulnerable by the conditions in which they find themselves such as sexual abuse. Vulnerable groups/children according to The New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:66) are groups/children at risk of not having needs met due to inadequate or inaccessible resources, and as a result are susceptible to deprivation or relative deprivation. Skinner et al. (2006:620) define vulnerable children as children living with sick and dying parents, children who are primarily dependent on a breadwinner who has died as a result of Aids, children who are in precarious care as a result of being dependent on extremely old, frail or disabled caregivers, and children in households that assume additional dependency by taking in orphaned children.

There are an increasing number of orphans in the rural areas of the Oliver Tambo district Municipality mostly due to the death of a parent(s). About 12 240 children have been identified as orphans due to HIV and AIDS related illnesses in the district
of Oliver Tambo in February 2007 (Community Empowerment Impact Report Phase 1:2007). An orphan according to the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2005) is “a child who has no surviving parent caring for him or her”. UNAIDS (2004:11) defines orphan as a child under the age of 18 who has lost at least one parent and a child whose mother has died is known as a maternal orphan; a child whose father has died is a paternal orphan. A child who has lost both parents is called a double orphan. According to the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2005), foster care is a temporary placement of a child and a foster parent is an approved person who is not the child’ parent or guardian.

HIV and AIDS, according to Alpaslan and Nziyan (2011:117), has devastated the family structure, which is already strained by other detrimental factors such as urbanization, poverty, and changing roles of women. AIDS has also had a major impact on individuals, the community structures, as well as on families in South Africa with children placed in foster care after the death of their parent(s) (Gouws & Abdool Karim, 2008:48; Van der Westhuizen, 2011:31). The loss of parents has a negative Impact in children’s lives because in many cases children are left with no means to survive, therefore, they become vulnerable in many ways especially to sexual abuse.

According to Barth et al. (2011:3), child welfare services have intended to support children’s safety and well-being in their homes and cost-effective out of home care for children such as in foster care. Foster care is perceived to be the best applied form of alternative care but despite various advantages that foster care offers “it is known that foster care practice – worldwide including South Africa – is suffering from serious deficiencies (Böning & Ferreira, 2013:519). According Rantla et al. (2002:57-61) cited in Alpaslan & Nziyane (2011:117), the extended family safety net weakens, with children such as orphans ending up in a variety of extremely vulnerable circumstances, such as being at risk of sexual abuse by neighbours or relatives, malnutrition, having their education seriously jeopardised because of an inability to pay school fees, child prostitution as well as child trafficking.

In research done by Basupeng (2002:16) and Van der Westhuizen (2011:32), orphans in South Africa experience feelings of despair and a sense of powerlessness in their lives. The orphans have low aspirations, poor self-esteem
and according to research done by Van der Westhuizen (2011:33), “they relieve their boredom and frustrations by turning to alcohol, drugs and sexual relationships". There is an increase in the numbers of sexual abuse cases reported to social workers even the sexual abuse of orphans (Motshegoa, 2011:1). According to Böning and Ferreira (2013:519), there are foster care children who live in unhealthy and unsafe communities with risk factors such as violence, poverty, unemployment, malnutrition and sexual abuse. Published studies according to Chinakidzwa, Dika, Molefe, Mutasa, Yawathe & Perumal (2013:195), done on sexual abuse of children in South Africa have largely focused on urban experiences. Apart from this a large part of people in South Africa continue to live in “villages, rural dwellings, homesteads and informal settlements” such as the Oliver Tambo District.

When orphans are staying alone, especially in child headed households, the extended family members do not give them full support if the children did not accept to stay with one of extended family members (Osei-Agyakwa, 2012:44). In cases such as these, some community members see an opportunity to groom these children for sex by saying they love them (Osei-Agyakwa, 2012:44). According to Fouché and Ysel (2006:249), during the grooming process the child is usually favoured by an adult where games or other things are promised by the perpetrator to build a relationship with the child.

Poverty and low socio-economic circumstances can also be risk factors that may lead to high risk behaviour of the child/ orphan such as prostitution in order to get something on the table for their younger siblings (Evian, 2006:21). Foster care grants may be another risk factor contributing to the vulnerability of orphans. According to Schönteich (2012:31), the research commissioned by the Nelson Mandela Children’s fund found that South African orphans are being exploited financially by their relatives who had taken them in, primarily to receive a state grant. Osei-Agyakwa (2012:29; 36) states that it has been reported that some caregivers, while offering minimal care, are using children to benefit from government orphan packages. The research found that targeting resources (such as foster grant or food parcels) often leads to unintended negative repercussions which, in some instances, increase the vulnerability of that intended beneficiary such as the orphan. According to research done by Mashologu-Kuse (2005:384)
and Van der Westhuizen (2011:46), most of the families in rural areas depend on social grants such as foster grants for living.

Foster care placements in families cause orphans to sometimes be vulnerable to sexual abuse. In a study done by Dowdell, Cavanaugh, Burgess, & Prently (2009:1) with 155 female children and adolescents (age 4-17 years) who were in foster care and had been evaluated for their sexual abusive and aggressive behaviours, they found that these girls had a significant history of maltreatment, chronic health issues, and foster care placement instability; 84% of the girls had been physically abused; 95% were victims of on-going abuse by the biological parents. Sexual abuse was reported by 81%, and 68% were sexually abused by more than one individual. According to McAdoo (2013:1), a 2011 audit of Sacramento Foster Care facilities found the addresses of more than 1000 registered sex offenders matched the addresses of licensed foster-care facilities and homes. About 600 of those offenders were considered a high risk. The report also identified a number of factors endangering these children in foster care such as a failure to investigate reports thoroughly and promptly of neglect and those who are paid to protect children couldn’t care less about their safety as long as the feds come through with the big bucks”. In some situations in South Africa, according to Frohlich (2008:354) “orphans cared for by the extended family are treated as second-class family members exploited by being given excessive household chores, forced to drop out of school to contribute to the added financial burden on the extended family, and subjected to physical and sexual abuse, with a string of knock-on consequences”.

Family members where orphans grew up fail often to accept and to treat them like their own children, especially when they are not sharing the same clan name with these children. According to Osei-Agyakwa (2012:36), orphaned children can also experience discrimination and exploitation within new households. Reports have emerged of orphaned children receiving less food, denied school fees, and forced to do more work. In research done by Van der Westhuizen, Roux and Strydom (2012:474-475), they found that children in foster care experienced problems in the relationships between the foster parent(s) and the foster child. Dunn and Keet (2012:175) found in their research that children in foster care in lower-income families perceive fathers as being absent figures who are mostly unemployed and
prone to substance abuse. Circumstances like this impact negatively and can lead to the abuse as well as the sexual abuse of the foster child.

The researcher as social worker came across orphans who live in foster families where they stay with mostly a grandparent, a relative or with a person who’s not blood related to the children because the custodian was seen to be suitable to take care of the children. In research done by Van der Westhuizen (2011:43), 57% of foster children stayed with the grandmother as head of the household and 7% with the grandfather as head of the household. For grandparents who become the primary care givers of their grandchildren this has profound physical as well as economic consequences (Minckler, 2003:207).

The researcher in her daily work as a social worker saw the need to identify risk factors contributing to the vulnerability of orphans for sexual abuse in rural areas such as the districts of Oliver Tambo. These children are the future leaders of the country and coming up with solutions to the existing problem can eliminate the prevalence of sexual abuse to orphans.

2. **RESEARCH QUESTION**

*What are the risk factors contributing to the vulnerability of sexual abuse regarding orphans in a rural area?*

3. **AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

To identify the risk factors contributing to the vulnerability of orphans towards sexual abuse.

4. **CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT**

If social workers have insight in the risk factors contributing to the vulnerability of orphans to sexual abuse in rural areas they can empower the orphans and their caregivers with knowledge to prevent orphans from being sexually abused.
5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher pursued a qualitative research methodology approach. The qualitative approach is used to answer questions about the phenomena with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participant’s perspective (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:94-95).

5.1 Literature review

The literature study creates a foundation, based on existing related knowledge (Fouché & Delport 2011:134; Neuman, 2000:466). The literature is an excellent source for selecting or focusing on a topic and refining a problem.

When doing the research, the researcher read articles and scholarly books in order to come up with topics such as child sexual abuse as well as the vulnerability of orphans regarding sexual abuse. Evaluation of existing literature revealed that there is insufficient research on the risk factors contributing to the vulnerability of sexual abuse regarding orphans in a rural area in the South African context. Data base on the subject of child sexual abuse were also consulted wherein the researcher consulted files at the office.

Databases the researcher used were EBSCO Host Web, and local and international journals and books. The researcher also used other data bases such as Google, Google Scholar, Science Direct and Sage Publications. The findings of the study were compared with other literature (Fouché & Delport, 2005:124).

5.2 Research design

The research was qualitative in nature (Creswell, 2007:37). Qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to collect data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study. Qualitative researchers are concerned with understanding rather than explanation, with naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:308). The research has an exploratory research objective because little is known about the phenomenon and the researcher wants to gain insight into the situation of the vulnerability of orphans to sexual abuse in a rural area (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:96). Exploratory studies
employ an open and flexible approach to research as it attempts to look for new insights into a phenomenon (Babbie, 2010:92). This study allowed the researcher to get information on a phenomenon that is relatively new in the context of research.

The researcher used the descriptive case study design. The descriptive case study strives to describe, analyse and interpret a phenomenon, which little is known about (Botma, Greef, Malaudzi & Wright, 2010:110; Fouché & Schurink, 2011:321). This design was used to explore and describe the risk factors contributing to the vulnerability of sexual abuse regarding orphans in a rural area (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:28). Research design is a plan or a blue print of how one intends to conduct research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:647). According to Grinnell (2001:231), a research design is a plan which includes every aspect of a proposed research study from conceptualization of the problem to the dissemination of findings. For any research the selection of an appropriate research design is crucial in enabling the researcher to arrive at valid findings, comparisons and conclusions (Kumar, 1999:16).

5.3 Research context

The research was done in the Ngqeleni area, Port St Johns area and SOS Children’s Home of the Oliver Tambo District in the Eastern Cape. The closest urban centre near Ngqeleni is Mthatha, which is situated approximately 30 km northwest of Ngqeleni. There are approximately 227 villages in the strategy area ranging in size from 10 to 3,050 people. Ngqeleni is part of one of the poorest areas of South Africa. Unemployment in 2008 was at 85%. Port St Johns is an administrative area in the O.R. Tambo District of Eastern Cape. It is situated 70 km (40 mi) east of Mthatha and it comprises of 130 rural villages. The population of the area is approximately 165,000 and 89.7% are Xhosa speaking people, 6.2% are English speaking and other languages form 4.1% of the population. Resources such as police stations and clinics are not nearby in these two areas. There are only primary and secondary schools. To attend a high school children have to travel by bus and because caregivers can’t afford it, most children drop out of school at grade seven. SOS is 3 km outside of Mthatha. It is a home to 141 children who live in the family home with an SOS mother.
5.4 Participants

The participants were selected on the basis of their relevance to the topic under study namely in phase one social workers who have experience in the sexual abuse of orphans from Ngqeleni and Port St Johns Service offices of the Department of Social Development as well as the SOS Children’s village in Mthatha in the Oliver Tambo District. In phase two the documents of sexually abused orphans from the caseloads of these social workers were consulted until data saturation was reached (Babbie, 2007:308; Greeff, 2011:366). Data saturation according to Polit and Beck cited in (Botma et al., 2010:330) and Strydom and Delport, 2011a:393), is the collection of data to the point where a sense of closure is attained because new data yields redundant information. The researcher evaluated all collected data in order to know when saturation had been reached. The qualitative researcher according to Strydom (2005:192-193) and (Botma et al., 2010:199) seeks out individuals, groups and settings where the specific topic being studied are most likely to occur.

Inclusion criteria: Phase one
- Social workers from the Department of Social Development in the Ngqeleni and Port St Johns areas as well as from SOS Children’s Village in the Oliver Tambo District who have experience in sexual abuse of orphans.
- Social workers who were fluent in English.
- Social workers from the Department of Social Development in the Ngqeleni and Port St Johns areas as well as the SOS Children’s Village who gave written consent to be part of the research.
- Social workers from the Department of Social Development in the Ngqeleni and Port St Johns areas as well as from the SOS Children’s Village who gave written consent that the interview can be tape recorded were part of the research.

Exclusion criteria: Phase one
- Social workers from the Department of Social Development in the Ngqeleni and Port St Johns areas as well as from SOS Children’s Village who have no experience in sexual abuse of orphans.

Inclusion criteria: Phase two
- Documents of orphans who were sexually abused from the case loads of the
social workers working at the Department of Social Development in the Ngqeleni and Port St Johns areas as well as the SOS Children’s Village.

- Documents of orphans who were sexually abused from the case loads of the social workers working at the Department of Social Development in the Ngqeleni and Port St Johns areas as well as the SOS Children’s Village of which the caregivers of the orphans gave written consent that the documents of the orphans can be used as part of the research.

**Exclusion criteria: Phase two**

- Documents of orphans who were not sexually abused from the case loads of the social workers working at the Department of Social Development in the Ngqeleni and Port St Johns areas as well as the SOS Children’s Village.

### 5.5 Sampling

For purposes of this study, the researcher made use of purposive sampling. Strydom (2005:202) states that this type of sampling is based on the judgement of the researcher in that the sample is composed of elements that contain most characteristics, representatives or typical attributes of the population that serves the purpose of the study best. The researcher thus chose “individuals and contexts by asking: Who can give the most and best information on a topic” (Botma et al., 2010:199). Great effort is put into involving a sufficient number of respondents by carefully explaining the purpose and value of the study to them. This sampling method is selected due to the sensitivity of the topic and the need to get information from the target group which is the social workers who have experience in the sexual abuse of orphans as well as information from the files of orphans who were sexually abused from the caseloads of these social workers.

The sample in this research was social workers who have experience in orphans who were sexually abused in **phase one** and the files received from the same social workers of orphans who were sexually abused in **phase two**. The sample composed of males and females. A sample comprises elements or a subset of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study, or it can be viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which we are interested (Strydom, 2011a:223-224). Strydom (2011a:223) defines sampling as a means of
taking a portion or a smaller number of units of a population as representative or having particular characteristics of that population.

5.6 Data collection

A qualitative approach was used for the purposes of this study. Qualitative researchers use a qualitative approach to collect data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study (Creswell, 2007:37).

Phase one: Social workers

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted by the researcher with the social workers in order to collect the richest data possible (Creswell, 2003:13). The interviews were organized around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth. Babbie and Mouton (2001:53) stated that a basic individual interview is an interview which allows the object of the study to speak for him/her rather than to provide respondents with a battery of their predetermined hypothesis-based research questions. Semi-structured interviews can last for a considerable amount of time and can become intense and involved, depending on the particular topic. With the semi-structured interview the researcher had a set of five predetermined open questions on an interview schedule. (Annexure 6) The interview was guided by an interview schedule and not dictated by it (Greeff, 2005:296). Greeff (2011:352) states that questions in an interview schedule should be neutral rather than leading. Jargon and ambiguous questions should be avoided in order to eliminate confusion and prejudice.

The interview schedule was pilot-tested with two social workers who are not part of the research as well as experts from the Department of Social Work at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus who are knowledgeable regarding the interview schedule construction as well as forensic social work. The experts evaluated the content validity (Botma, et al., 2010:137). After the schedule was pilot-tested, adjustments were made to the schedule.

Audio recordings were made during the interviews with the consent of the social workers. The main task, according to Monette, Sullivan and De Jong (2005:79), is to record the responses of the respondents. Rubin and Babbie (2005:457) feel that a
tape recorder is a powerful tool because it allows the interviewer to keep full attention focused on respondents. Extensive field notes by the researcher directly after the interview were written (Greeff, 2005:298). The quantity and quality of information exchange depends on how astute and creative the interviewer is at understating and managing the relationship (Monette et al., 2005: 178).

Phase two: Document analysis

Files of the orphans who were sexually abused from the caseloads of these social workers were also used as a case study until data saturation. A case study according to Creswell (2007:73), involves an exploration of a bounded system, bounded by time, context and or place or a single multiple case over a period of time through detailed in depth-data collection. Case studies may include interviews, documents, observations or archival records (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:321). The documents were kept in a locked cabinet with the written consent of the social worker in the office of the researcher until data saturation was reached.

5.7 Procedures followed

- Written permission was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University. (Annexure 1)

- Written permission was obtained from the managers of the Department of Social Development and the SOS children’s home in the Ngqeleni area of the Port St Johns area in the Oliver Tambo District to conduct the study and to use the social workers who have experience in orphans who were sexually abused as well as the files of orphans who were sexually abused. (Annexures 2 and 3)

- The managers of the mentioned organisations supplied the researcher with a list of the social workers’ details.

- After permission was obtained, the researcher contacted the social workers, and discussed the aim of the research and the procedures of the research with them in their offices at the different organisations. The social workers were informed about the benefits for the department and for them regarding the study. It was
also emphasised that there will be no cost to them as a result of their participation in the study and they will not receive payment. They could withdraw from the research at any time without any consequences. They were also informed that the interview will be tape recorded.

- Social workers were given a week to read the consent form before they decided to take part in the study.

- The social workers who gave written permission to be part of the research and the interview to be tape recorded were asked to identify caregivers of orphans who were sexually abused and explain the aim of the research to them. (Annexure 4)

- The social workers identified the caregivers and discussed the aim, procedures and the benefits of the research for them. They were also asked permission to use the documents of the orphans as part of the study. It was also emphasised that there will be no cost to them as a result of their participation in the study and they will not receive any payment. They could withdraw from the research at any time without any consequences.

- The caregivers were given a week to read the consent form before they decided to take part in the study.

- After the permission from the caregivers to use the information in the files of these orphans the social workers in co-operation with the researcher discussed again the aim of the research with the caregivers of the orphans to seek written consent.

- After written consent from the caregivers that the files/documents could be used were received the data's were collected in themes by the researcher in the offices of the social workers and verified by the social worker who delivers services to the sexually abused orphans as well as the caregivers of the orphans (member checking). The researcher gave a letter in the alphabet beforehand to each respondent's document such as respondent A, respondent B et cetera in advance, instead of using their names to maintain confidentiality. (Annexure 5)
• Interviews with the social workers were conducted in their service offices and sometimes in the boardroom of the service office to avoid disturbances from clients and other colleagues. The researcher gave a number beforehand to each respondent’s document such as respondent 1, respondent 2 et cetera in advance, instead of using their names to maintain confidentiality.

• After an interview with the social worker a detailed report was written.

• The report was completed in a mini-dissertation with recommendations.

5.8 Data Analysis

Phase one: Social workers

Data analysis involved continual rereading of the data received from the interviews with social workers, field notes, and files by means of developing themes and highlights found within. Brink (2006:170) defines data analysis as a method of organising the raw data and displaying them in a fashion that will provide answers to the research questions and entails categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing the data and describing them in meaningful terms.

The researcher looked for trends and patterns that reappear within the different data received (Greeff, 2011:373). In analysing the data the researcher considered the words, context, frequency of comments, specificity of comments, what was said and what not as well as finding the main idea (Greeff, 2011:373). All the audio tape recordings were transcribed to analyse the data (Botma et al., 2010:220). The researcher analysed the data according to Botma et al. (2010:213) and Schurink, Fouché, and De Vos (2011:402) guidelines which are 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.

• During transcription, enough space was left on both the left and right margin to allow the researcher to make notes during analysis.

• The topics were coded.
• The processing and interpretation of the qualitative data was done by hand and themes and sub-themes were identified.

The researcher made use of one of the social workers as a co-coder to ensure the accuracy of the data and also verify the correctness by listening to the recorded data and working through the reports (Botma et al., 2010:221). In this regard the qualitative data was analysed in the form of themes (Creswell, 2009:184).

**Phase two: Document analysis**

The content document analysis was used (Strydom & Delport, 2011b:380) and the following steps, according to Rapley (2008:130-13) cited in Strydom and Delport (2011b:381), were followed:

• Formulate the initial research question.
• Start a research diary.
• Find possible sources of material and begin to generate an archive.
• Transcribe the texts in some detail.
• Critically read and interrogate the texts and documents.
• The researcher gave a number beforehand to each respondent’s document such as respondent A, respondent B et cetera in advance, instead of using their names to maintain confidentiality.
• Develop a comprehensive and systematic coding scheme.
• Analyse by regularity and variability in the data and form tentative findings.
• Check credibility, validity and reliability by means of case analysis and comparing findings to previous work and member checking.
• Write up the findings.

**6. ETHICAL ASPECTS**

Ethical permission was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) to conduct the study. (Annexure 1) This study forms part of an umbrella research project. (Annexure 7) The data will be kept at the Social Work Division of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus for at least five years locked up in the store room prohibiting all people, including the researcher and study leader form having
access to the material. Electronic transcripts will be deleted. The following ethical aspects were important for the study.

- **Actions and competence of the research**

The researcher is a social worker working for the Department of Social Development. The researcher has experience in conducting interviews with sexual abused children and old people. The researcher has also expanded her knowledge by reading books so as to acquaint herself with new developments in interviewing techniques. As a registered social worker the researcher has to obey the codes of ethics and rules for social workers of the South African Council for Social Service Professions.

- **Written informed consent**

Respect for persons requires that subjects be given the opportunity to choose what shall or shall not happen to them (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008:37). The researcher gave a detailed explanation of the purpose of the research to the participants. According to Strydom (2011b:118), the researcher remains obligated to give a complete explanation of the total investigation, without pressure or unnecessary interference, in clear and intelligible language. Informed consent ensures the full knowledge and cooperation of the subjects, while also resolving, or at least relieving, any possible tension, aggression, resistance or insecurity in the subjects. Participants (social workers and caregivers of orphans) were informed about their right to informed consent. All the participants were given enough time to read and sign an informed consent form before the research starts. Enough time was given so that respondents should not feel coerced to participate in the research as participation was voluntary and should feel free to withdraw from research at any time without penalty.

- **Violation of privacy / anonymity / confidentiality**

Privacy in its most basic meaning is to keep to oneself that which is normally not intended for others to observe or analyze. Every individual has the right to privacy and it is his or her right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his or her attitudes beliefs and behaviour will be revealed (Strydom, 2011b:119). Strydom
(2011b:119) defines confidentiality as a continuation of privacy, which refers to agreements between persons that limit others access to private information. The right to privacy was ensured to the respondents and the information received from them will be treated with confidentiality. Participant’s names were not used during the research so that they should not be identified after the research. The researcher gave a number beforehand to each respondent such as respondent 1, respondent 2 et cetera in advance, instead of using their names to maintain confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in the social worker’s office in private and the collected data was kept safe in a locked cabinet at the office of the researcher. The researcher also clarified possible misunderstandings of the information received from respondents.

Approval from Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) to conduct the study in the Social Work Forensic Practice was given. Written permission NWU-0027-09-S1 was obtained.

- **Avoidance of harm**

  Avoidance of harm means that research participants must not be subjected to any unnecessary risk of harm. Their participation in research must be essential to achieving scientifically and socially important aims that cannot be achieved without the participation of human participants (Canterbry Christ Church University, 2006:5). The researcher treated all the participants with dignity and respect they deserve.

- **Gate keeper**

  The researcher consulted the Manager of the Department of Social Development and the manager at SOS children’s village requesting permission to conduct research with the employees. Permission was granted and the list of social workers who participated in the research was given to the researcher. Appointments were made with the social workers in different offices to conduct interviews.

- **Benefits and Risks**

  Social workers and the organisations can benefit in the study by means of preventative programmes that should be implemented in rural areas and foster
parents that should be capacitated through workshops on parenting skills and development stages of children. The community at large can also benefit in the study through letting community members remember that your child is my child by the way of bringing back humanity. The principle of beneficence imposes the duty to benefit others and, in research, a duty to maximize net benefits. Care must be taken to ensure that intention of research is to generate new knowledge that will produce benefits for participants themselves, for other individuals, society as a whole or for advancement of knowledge (Catebry Christ Church University, 2006:5).

➢ Costs and remuneration

The researcher visited the respondents in their work places, therefore, there were no costs that affected the respondents. Travelling expenses were for the researcher.

➢ Release and publication of the findings

The findings on the data collected during interviews with the respondent were compiled in a form of a mini dissertation. The Department of Social Development and SOS children’s villages will receive copies of the mini dissertation. The respondents will also be informed about the findings.

7. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness according to Botma et al. (2010:232), has four epistemological standards namely truth, value, applicability, consistently and neutrality. Truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality were used as criteria to assist the value of findings according to the standards, strategies and applied criteria to ensure trustworthiness in the summary by Botma et al. (2010:234).
### Figure 1: Standards, Strategies and Applied Criteria to Ensure Trustworthiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epistemological standards</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth Value</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>The researcher ensured that prolonged engagement is applied by establishing initial rapport with the participants and doing interviews herself. Field notes were written directly after each interview with the participants. The researcher reviewed all data and made use of a co-coder. Reflexivity was achieved during discussions with the study leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Auditing was made available by the capturing of data by means of verbatim audio tape recordings. A co-coder was used during the analysis of the semi-structured interviews as well as document analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>Selection of the sample was clearly described. Saturation of data came from the sources in the study. A dense description of the methodology ensured the possibility of transferability. The findings were applied to the population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutrality</td>
<td>Conformability</td>
<td>Field notes made by the researcher were comprehensive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8. Limitations of the Study

**Availability of respondents**

One of the respondents did not honor the appointment as planned due to busy hours at work and other commitments during the weeks. The research ended up omitting her as a respondent.
9. DESCRIPTION OF KEYWORDS

9.1 Orphan

UNAIDS (2004:11) defines orphan as a child under the age of 18 who has lost at least one parent and a child whose mother has died is known as a maternal orphan; a child whose father has died is a paternal orphan. A child who has lost both parents is called a double orphan.

Traditionally the term “orphan” according to Van der Westhuizen (2011:17), is a child whose mother or both parents have died, but used in this way it tends to underestimate the total number of orphans or the impact of paternal death, especially within the context of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. According to the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2005) the term orphan means "a child who has no surviving parent caring for him or her".

Specifically, orphans can be:

- Maternal orphans (mother has died).
- Paternal orphans (father has died).
- Double orphans (both parents have died) (Van der Westhuizen, 2011:17).

9.2 Sexual abuse

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (South Africa, 2007) defines child sexual abuse as:

- Sexual abuse or assault of a child or allowing a child to be sexually abused or assaulted
- Encouraging, inducing or forcing a child to be used for 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
9.3 Vulnerable children

Skinner, Tsheko, Mtero- Munyatsi, Segwabeni, Chibatamoto, Mfecane, Chindiwana, Nkomo, Tlou, and Chitiyo (2006:620) defines vulnerable children as children living with sick and dying parents, children who are primarily dependent on a breadwinner who has died as a result of Aids, children who are in precarious care as a result of being dependent on extremely old, frail or disabled caregivers, and children in households that assume additional dependency by taking in orphaned children.

10. RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of the study will be discussed according to the two phases of the research. This research was done in two phases namely phase one was interviews with social workers who have experience with orphans who were sexually abused. Phase two was document analysis of documents/files of orphans of the caseloads of the social works in phase one who were sexually abused.

10.1 Phase one: Interviews with social workers

In phase one semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher with social workers who have experience with orphans who were sexually abused. Themes and sub-themes were distinguished in the study during data analysis.

10.1.1 Profile of the participants

Ten social workers from the Department of Social Development and one social worker from SOS Children’s Home in the Oliver Tambo District, which includes Ngqeleni, Port St Johns and Mthatha, and twelve documents of orphans who were sexually abused from the caseloads of these social workers, were included in the research. The researcher referred to social workers as participant 1 to 11 and to the documents of the children as participant A to L.
TABLE 1: AGE AND GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent number</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 11</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten of the participants were females and one male. From the eleven social workers, three (3) participants were between the ages of 21-30, seven (7) participants were between the ages of 31-40, one (1) participant was between 41 and 50 years. All the participants were registered with the South African Council for Service Professions and had either a four year degree or a diploma in Social work. All the participants are isiXhosa speaking but the interviews were in English because it is their second language.

10.1.2 Themes obtained from the interviews

The researcher used semi-structured interviews guided by a schedule of predetermined questions to gather the data. After the completion of the interviews the researcher identified nine main themes that can be summarized as follow:
Figure 2: Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: Experiences as social worker with sexually abused orphans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2: Factors contributing to the vulnerability of orphans to sexual abuse</td>
<td>Foster parents, Poverty, Abuse of substances in foster homes, Taverns, Illiteracy, Child headed households, Factors in the community, Orphans joining gangs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3: Protection of orphans in foster families from sexual abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 4: Services rendered to sexual abused orphans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 5: Effects of sexual abuse on orphans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 1: Experiences of Social Workers with Sexually Abused Orphans**

The first theme focuses on social worker’s experiences regarding the sexual abuse of orphans and according to all the participants’ their experiences as social workers are that orphans are one of the groups that are the most vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Participant one feels sad because the children that are sexually abused have no biological parent. Most of these children become disappointed in people such as the foster parents and the community that has to protect the child. They feel the parents and community failed them. The sexual abuse of orphans according to this participant is a problem because of many reported cases. According to one participant’s experiences “the community has to go back to their values which is “Ubuntu” to know that your child is my child. The community members must work together to fight sexual abuse in their community. Everyone knows that the child has no parents and they are taking advantages of that, because if the child has
biological parents, the parents will defend the child. It is not easy to touch a child who has parents”.

Another participant answered the following regarding her experiences “I had a case of a sexually abused orphan where the orphan was sexually abused by her uncle staying in the same home. The foster child was placed in foster care with her grandmother. The case charges were dropped because the victim did not attend the court proceedings and the perpetrator was out on bail. The grandmother of the child was trying to protect the alleged perpetrator as he was her child. The grandmother of the child wanted to hide the matter and treat it as a family matter. In rural areas people practice rituals. Therefore, the family slaughtered a goat saying they are cleansing the horror so that it cannot happen again. They took it as a family matter because they do not want it to be known by everyone. Even though the victim was her grandchild, she loved her son more than her granddaughter as he was her son. When you love your child as a parent you love him/her with the love that you cannot love another person with. During the court date the grandmother of the child left the child at home and the grandmother of the alleged perpetrator was not assisting the victim as she did not want her son to be charged”. Cultural and religious beliefs such as the slaughter of a goat saying they are cleansing the horror are often partial explanations of violence against women and children in South Africa. Maluleka and Nadar (2002:14) refer to this as the “unholy trinity” of religion, culture and the power of gender socialization. The incest as a family secret is a problem in South Africa as discussed by the participant. Family members experience a high degree of emotional pressure to maintain the secret of sexual abuse and therefore it is taboo in most families to discuss sexual issues in a family context (Crosson-Tower, 2005:175-176; Spies, 2006:12).

As social worker the sexual abuse of an orphan, according to one participant, is mostly between the child and an adult which is most of the time a family member or a stranger. According to this participant the sexual abuse of orphans is a huge problem because “most foster parents are still young and they do not have parenting skills to use in looking after the orphans. Some foster parents are abusing substances and they do not care for the orphans. Sometimes the foster parent goes
to Johannesburg to her husband, leaving behind the children without any person who is looking after those children”.

The experiences of two participants were “orphans are more vulnerable to sexual abuse because in most cases they get this abuse from family members, relatives and strangers. Orphans usually experience this abuse at their youngest ages, for instance you will find that the child has been raped already at the age of three but it is only discovered at the age of fourteen years. They are not reporting to the caregivers because their perpetrators are threatening to kill them”. Difficulties as social worker are experienced because orphans in most cases do not want to speak openly about what happened to them. Sexual abused orphans also experience feelings of helplessness and anger and the social workers have to deal with those issues. Orphans feel there is no way to go forward and usually blame themselves for what happened to them”.

According to another participant “some children, where this participant is working as social worker, tend to blame their biological parents for unavailability to protect them as children. Most of them have questions they could not provide answers for because some children tend to blame themselves as if they are the one who triggered the perpetrator. Children feel dirty when being sexually abused”.

Three participants experienced that most orphans are often living under child headed households. Because of this, criminals and rapist, take advantages of these situations. Orphans have a need to be loved. In one of the cases the orphan told the social worker that she was not abused, she was in love with the person whom was alleged to sexually abuse her.

Participant eleven had the following experience as social worker: “Orphans who are victims of sexual abuse are afraid to talk about their experiences about sexual abuse as they fear that they will be chased away by their foster families as they do not want to be homeless. They prefer to keep the abuse a secret”.

The social workers have different experiences in their service delivery to orphans in the rural areas. According to the experiences of these social workers foster family members where orphans grew up fail often to accept and to treat the foster children like their own children, especially when they are not sharing the same clan name.
with the children (Alpaslan & Nziyane (2011:129). Most of the orphans according to the social workers blame their biological parents for not being there to protect them as children. According to Osei-Agyakwa (2012:36), orphaned children can also experience discrimination and exploitation within new households. The ability of foster parents to meet the children in their care’s fundamental needs plays a critical role in supporting and maintaining a family (Alpaslan & Nziyane (2011:122). This situation can lead to problems between foster parents and foster children. In research done by Van der Westhuizen et al. (2012:474-475), they found that children in foster care experienced problems in the relationships between the foster parent(s) and the foster child. Because of all these problems the sexual abuse of children and also orphans in foster care results in physical, psychological and social problems such as a low self-esteem and feelings of helplessness and powerlessness (Holm, 2010:1; Segal, Gerdes. & Steiner 2007:169; Spies, 2006:3). Circumstances like the social workers experienced, impact negatively on orphans and lead to the vulnerability of orphans to sexual abuse especially in rural areas.

THEME 2: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE VULNERABILITY OF ORPHANS TO SEXUAL ABUSE

Respondents were asked to give factors that contribute to the vulnerability for sexual abuse of orphans. The following responses were received from them:

Sub-theme 1: Role of foster parents

According to several participants orphans have no one to protect them and are taken advantage of. They receive in most cases ill treatment from their foster parents. “Orphans do not disclose about sexual abuse due to the threats made by the abuser and also to the lack of support from their foster parents and that cause them to lose trust to them. Sometimes foster parents leave the children alone and went to Johannesburg to her husband and that causes orphans to be vulnerable to sexual abuse because there is no one who looks after them”. Foster parents do not always have the same feeling in their heart for the foster child than for their own child. “Orphans are more vulnerable because they sometimes have no one to take care of them and even if they are staying with the foster family the members the family might not like them and they might mistreat and abuse them and take
advantage of them since they have no parents”. Some foster parents tend to be defensive when it is found that their child has raped the foster child, saying that the child will never do that”.

According to Shetty and Powel (2003:25), there are concerns regarding the physical and educational needs of orphaned children. Living through cycles of poverty, malnutrition, stigma, exploitation and sexual abuse without the love and support of a family, orphans in Africa suffer recurrent psychological trauma, caused by the death of their parents (Van der Westhuizen, 2011:3). In research done by Barth et al. (2011:71) in the United States, they experienced that in 20% to 35% of cases, physical abuse, general neglect and sexual abuse of foster children were reported.

According to five participants it is not always that foster parents do not want to protect orphans, because sometimes sexual abuse happens when the foster parent is not around. Orphans believe everybody and without the protection of a parent such as the foster parent, they sometimes are being sexually abused by those they believe and trust the most such as family members. They do not always have someone such as their biological mother to talk to if they experienced problems like this. According to these participants a lack of resources in a rural area is a real problem, because orphans do not always know who to contact and where to go in a difficult situation.

In research done by Nqaphi (2013:20; 30-31) he found that 70% of children who were sexually abused in the Queenstown area were in absence of their mothers or grandmothers and mostly by people they knew. According to Lewis (2005:101), children are sometimes harmed by someone they knew and trust most.

Participants also felt that the alleged perpetrator knows that the foster parent is not the foster child’s biological parent. Because of this, there is a possibility according to the perpetrator that the foster parent will not support and protect the foster child if the child is sexually abused. “Sometimes the alleged perpetrator is a relative of the foster parent(s), so they hide it because they do not want to cause conflict. They want to maintain the good relationship within the relative. Sometimes the foster parent is unemployed, the perpetrator is supporting them and the foster parent will say we cannot allow him to be arrested, who will support us”. In cases such as this
the perpetrator will start with a grooming process where the orphan will be favoured by the perpetrator with things such as money, toys or clothes to build a relationship with the child (Fouché & Ysel, 2006:249). Orphans in these circumstances are vulnerable to sexual abuse and can fall into the trap by the perpetrator and then become pregnant or contract HIV and AIDS, which also causes them to leave school and to look after their babies.

**Sub-theme 2: Poverty**

Poverty is one of the main factors according to six of the participants that contribute to the vulnerability of orphans to be sexually abused. Foster parents do not always support these orphans financially. Even though the foster parents receive foster grants, that grants are not sufficient to support a foster child. “Some foster parents are greedy and they use the foster care grant for their own needs”. Most of the foster families, especially in rural areas, where there are not many working opportunities, depend on the social grants such as foster grants. “Because of financial problems orphans start having love affairs with the aim of getting financial assistance. Because of this situation they are vulnerable to sexual abuse”.

Most of the orphans in South Africa stay with grandmothers who’s main financial support in the household comes mostly from grants such as foster grants and old age pensions (Delport, 2007:91; Van der Westhuizen, 2011:43;45). These grants are in most cases not enough to care for the family which causes financial problems such as poverty. Minckler (2003:199) said the following: “For grandparents who become the primary caregivers for their grandchildren, the personal decision to care often has profound economic consequences”. According to Barth et al. (2011:181), studies in the United States and Canada indicated that one third of foster parents are women managing the stresses of poverty and single parenthood. Poverty according to Evian (2006:21), is one of the reasons why women are forced to sell sex to earn precious money for food and basic needs and to help raise their children. According to him poverty is also a reason why young girls may sell sex to older men.

Foster grants are some of the risk factors according to Schönteich (2012:31) and Osei-Agyakwa (2012:29-36), contributing to the vulnerability of orphans. Relatives
take these orphans in their households only to benefit from the grants and because
the orphans do not benefit in most cases from the grants, they are vulnerable to
sexual abuse. According to research done by Mashologu-Kuse (2005:384) and Van
der Westhuizen (2011:46), most of the families in rural areas depend on social
grants such as foster grants for living. Poverty and low socio-economic
circumstances are risk factors that may lead to high risk behaviour of the
child/orphan such as drugs and substance use; joining bad gangs which may result
in crime; sexual abuse and also HIV and AIDS infections through prostitution in
order to get something on the table for their younger siblings (Evian, 2006:21).

Sub-theme 3: Abuse of substances in foster homes

The abuse of substances in foster homes is one of the factors according to one of
the participants that contribute to the vulnerability of orphans being sexually abused.
“Some family members where the orphan is living abuse alcohol and such
environments are not conductive for the upbringing of the child”.

The abuse of substances by parents in out-of-home placements, according to Barth
et al. (2011:36), has become a major problem not only in South Africa but also in
other countries like the United States. In research done by Mudavanhu and Schenck
(2014:379) in the Grabouw area of the Western Cape, various participants
confirmed that the reason why some of the youths are involved in substance abuse
is that they were brought up in homes where parents/family members and other
siblings are using substances. One can conclude with the views of Van Niekerk
(2006:112) that many sexual offences also in foster homes are committed whilst the
offender was under the influence of substances that may inhibit responsible
behaviour management and control.

Sub-theme 4: Taverns

One of the factors contributing to the vulnerability of the sexual abuse of orphans
according to one participant is taverns in a community. Foster parents are in some
instances not there for the orphan and in many cases are uninvolved in the child’s
live. Because foster parents are uninvolved and do not always support the orphan
financially well these orphans visit the taverns. “Taverns are a place where many
people gathe especially males, therefore, these children go there and they become victims of sexual abuse”.

Parents are not involved in their children’s lives. According to Mudavanhu and Schenck (2014:379), uninvolved parents are, therefore, less attentive to their children’s needs, because they have either refused to undertake their parental responsibility or they are dealing with their own personal stressful issues. Because they are uninvolved parents, these orphans sometimes turn to alcohol abuse which they get in taverns mostly. According to Spies (2006:58), children such as orphans may turn to alcohol or drugs also to suppress their feelings and memories also of sexual abuse.

**Sub-theme 5: Illiteracy**

Illiteracy according to two participants plays a role in the sexual abuse of an orphan especially in the rural areas. “You will find that in rural areas when sexual abuse happened they treat it as a family matter and they do not report it to the police. They ask the perpetrator to pay the damage not aware that the child’s life is in danger”. Some of the caregivers usually think that sexual abuse is supposed to be discussed by family members alone without the law or police and, therefore, they fail to report to government departments and community leaders”. “Parents such as foster parents lack parenting skills and need to be taught about developmental stages on how to treat children in their care.

According to Sanderson (2005:12), parents need to educate themselves about child sexual abuse if they want to keep their child safe. The foster families and orphans need to know what sexual abuse is all about and how to talk about it and how to prevent the abuse. Sexual abuse of a child depends sometimes on what an ethnic group understands as sexual abuse (Ngubane, 2010:27). Perspectives and meanings vary from one ethnic group to another. Perceptions set guidelines that individuals inherit as a member of a particular society and that informs them how to experience and interpret their world (Dawes & Higson-Smith, 2005:98).
Sub-theme 6: Child-headed households

According to two participants, most foster families are child-headed households where the foster parent is also a child, who most of the time has no skills how to look after siblings (Osei-Agyakwa, 2012:44). “These foster parents need to be trained so that they can know the developmental stages of the child in order to know how to look after these children”. Foster parents from child headed households are also unable to protect their siblings as they do not have parenting skills”. Some orphans live alone in a house with siblings. The foster parents are not staying with them but somewhere else. “Sometimes the elder child leaves the other children alone in search of something for them to eat which make orphans in most cases more vulnerable to sexual abuse”. In cases such as these, child-headed households put these orphans as targets to perpetrators because there is no one to care and protect these children. “Community members know who stays where and what happens in the community. They know that the household is child headed and, therefore, they take chances, fully aware that there is no adult staying in that house”.

Orphan children living in child-headed households, “had to live without proper guidance, discipline and control, which could have adverse effects on the children when they grow into adulthood as they would lack proper skills required for their adult life” (Nziyane & Alpaslan, 2012:305). Children who live in a home alone and unsupervised, can, according to Levelnson and Morin (2001:23) be considered as one of the factors that put these children, and especially an orphan, at risk of being sexually abused. According Rantla et al. (2002) cited in Alpaslan and Nziyane (2011:117), the extended family safety net weakens, with children such as orphans end up in a variety of extremely vulnerable circumstances, such as being at risk of sexual abuse by neighbours or relatives, malnutrition, having their education seriously jeopardised because of an inability to pay school fees, child prostitution as well as child trafficking.

Sub-theme 7: Factors in the community

According to participants, the community in rural areas plays a huge role in the vulnerability of the sexual abuse of orphans. “The loss of humanity by community members, is of great concern. When children are left alone, neighbours should be
looking after those children and not taking the advantage that they can take a chance to sexually abuse the children”. “In the communities such as the rural communities there are educated people who are well-known to the communities. When they do something bad they will not be brought forward for what they did. For example if the person is a pastor nothing will be done to identify him”. Long distances that children have to walk to school, especially in rural areas such as the Ngqeleni area, can play a role according to two participants in the sexual abuse of children because children pass through the forest to reach school and they go alone when they go to school. In research done by Potgieter et al. (2006:21), they experienced that large numbers of women were concerned about children who walk to school. According to these women children aged seven to twelve, 61% of them travelled on their own, 30% travelled with other children from the house to school and most of the children over twelve years of age (80%) travelled by themselves to school. If there is no one who can stand up on behalf of orphans, community members sometimes treat orphans as if they are beggars according to two participants who must be abused and also sexually abused. “In rural communities there is a myth that raping a virgin child can cure HIV/AIDS”.

Orphans are stigmatized by their families and community members and according to Roux et al. (2010:44), orphans affected by HIV and AIDS have to cope with severe psychological burdens such as a low self-esteem, experiences of anxiety, aggressive behaviour and depression. Stigma in the community about why the child is an orphan is of the common factors according to one participant why orphans are being judged by community members who gossip about them.

Pornography according to one participant is another reason why orphans are sexually abused. “In most cases children such as orphans are exposed to pornography and as a result of this they are taken advantage of by the sex molesters who sexually abuse them. Sometime the chat rooms also contribute to this problem because molesters tend to pose on line as a child himself but discover later that he is very old”.

The death of parents caused by AIDS is one of the reasons why community members gossip and why these orphans are stigmatized especially in rural areas. According to Frohlich (2008:354-355) stigma has been a pervasive dimension of
HIV and AIDS since the beginning of the pandemic. Stigma according to them goes hand in hand with discrimination. Many children affected by AIDS, such as orphans, are left abandoned and vulnerable and in need of care and support (Frohlich, 2008:360). To combat stigma and discrimination all need to work towards sensitizing local communities to the needs of those affected by HIV and AIDS (Frohlich, 2008:356). Skinner et al. (2006:623) confirm that the community in which the child lives such as unsafe environments like informal settlements without adequate housing, lack of toilets leading to the presence of raw sewage, or high levels of crime and exposure to or participation in crime, gangs and drug use, also influences vulnerability to sexual abuse of children such as orphans.

**Sub-theme 8: Orphans joining gangs**

Different circumstances where orphans grew up can cause some of them to join gangs according to all participants. According to them, orphans who join gangs can be a factor why they are being sexually abused.

“The child may join gangs because she/he does not get love in the foster family so the child starts to misbehave because she/he feels that she/he is lonely and does not have anyone. They feel lonely especially when the foster parents do not treat them like their child. They do not get love like the foster parent’s children. Most foster children grew up in the maternal home and want to know her/his paternal side too. Because the father of the child is sometimes unknown to the child’s maternal family, as the mother of the child did not disclose before she passed away, the child experiences in most cases an identity crisis. Such things frustrate foster children and they start to misbehave by starting to join gangs”.

According to three participants it is when the children live alone in child headed households that they have no one to control them. “Therefore, when there is no care, nobody is going to control them and what they do with their time. So joining a gang could be a cool thing to them, though in those gangs there are drugs and alcohol. Substance abuse may lead to sexual abuse and when you are under the influence of drugs anyone can take advantage of you. Even if the child is in the care of a parent, the foster parents have a tendency of having a loose control, they will
say since these children have no parents I am not allowed to punish the children and will let the children to whatever they want to do.”

It is the environment they grew up in, peer pressure drugs, alcohol, a lack of attention from the foster parent that can contributes in joining a gang because they seek attention from outside, according to three participants”. “Peer pressure plays a big role. Because they do not have parents to guide and love them they turn to peers to seek for what they believe is real love. By joining gangs they become more vulnerable to sexual abuse”. When they are tired of being not accepted and abused orphans sometimes decide to run away from home and rather join gangs.

Gangs are one of the groups that young people like to join. According to Zastrow (2010:305), in most cases delinquent gangs are created because the needs of these “youths are not being met by the family, neighborhood, or traditional community (such as the schools, police, and recreational and religious institutions)”. The environment they grew up in sometimes also contributes to peer-pressure. They join gangs due to loss of trust in their family members and, therefore, they decide to join gangs for protection, believing that they will be protected more in the street with the gangs than in the family setting.

THEME 3: PROTECTION OF ORPHANS IN FOSTER FAMILIES FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

A question was asked to the participants on what should be done to ensure that children in foster families are not sexual abused. The following responses were received from the participants.

“I really do not know what can be done to protect orphans because foster parents are screened very well before the foster placement, but during the screening process they give the good part about them and their household to the social worker, knowing that the social worker does not stay with them. They do not care much about the orphans. Their aim is only to get money and as a result that money is used for their own purposes not taking care of the owner of the money”.

“We should have dialogues and workshops with the families on how to raise these foster parents so that they can be able to overcome challenges they encounter of
raising these foster children. Follow up visits to check whether the child is still happy and the foster parent is still happy to stay with the child. If the foster parent is unhappy with the child, there must be sessions with the child so that the problem that arises (for example if the child misbehaves) can be solved”.

“Leadership in the communities by people such as religious, political and traditional leaders should be approached so that they can be aware of these cases of sexual abuse which happen in foster care. Foster children need to be equipped and educated in all forms of abuse so that they can be able to protect themselves. Child headed households should be known by the community leaders so that they can protect these children because they may not know that there is no one to protect them”.

“As social workers we need to do more community outreach like having community dialogues, going to schools making children aware about what sexual abuse is and what they can do when they are sexually abused. Even the foster parents need to be educated on what to do when the child is sexually abused and which symptoms they should look for when a child is being abused”. According to four participants all foster parents need to be trained on parenting skills and developmental stages of children. Awareness campaigns are needed in communities so as to equip and protect children from sexual abuse. Foster parents also need to be encouraged not to leave foster children alone at home as that can result in sexual abuse”.

“I think foster families should take care of the foster children and communicate with the children in a proper way. Report sexual abuse cases as it is also important to increase the knowledge and awareness of abuse and the rights of children among children”

An important recommendation of one of the participants was “to carefully screen those families, for instance you cannot place a child where one of the family members has a history or a record of rape and you cannot place a child in a family that is selling alcohol. A child placed in such families is 100 % exposed to sexual abuse. It is very important to educate those children about sexual abuse that is mostly done by family members and relatives”. Another participant added to this recommendation by saying the following: “Making sure that family members comfort
their level of touching, hugging and kissing. Do not force touching on children who seem uncomfortable by being touched”. Because orphans have experienced various losses, social workers have to consider how to maintain and strengthen good-quality attachment experiences for children (Van der Westhuizen, et al., 2012:481). Always be cautious with playful touch such as a play, fighting and tickling. Help the children to learn the importance of privacy. Keep adult sexuality private. Always supervise and monitor children’s play”. “Sexual abuse is not acceptable under any circumstances therefore, foster families should provide these children with real love and not only with a foster care grant. More information to be provided to foster parents by social workers on ways to raise foster children. Close monitoring of foster parents by social workers is needed” this was the view of another participant.

According to Bungane (2006), social workers have a responsibility to enhance the quality of life of all people. The social worker, therefore, plays a very important role in service delivery to the foster child, such as the orphan in foster care and the foster parent (Delport, Roux & Strydom, 2008:307). Orphans need to secure permanent selective attachments to one or more loving and responsive care giver, such as foster parents, in order to achieve healthy psychological development (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2012:468).

THEME 4: SERVICES RENDERED TO SEXUAL ABUSED ORPHANS

A question was asked to the social workers about services that can be rendered to orphans to protect them from sexual abuse. The following responses were received from them.

“I assist the child in going to the police station and opening the case. I remove the child because you will notice that some foster parents tend to be defensive especially when the child says it is the foster parent’s child who sexually abused the orphan. When you try to find answers from the foster parents they will tell you that my child never did that. I prefer to take the child and to look for another family who will look after the child. I offer counseling to the victim. The child is also taken to Thuthuzela Care Centre for examination. I do ongoing counseling and also when the child has to go to court I prepare the orphan for the court proceedings to stand strong and talk about what happened”.
“Counseling, awareness campaigns in the communities, referral to Sinawe stop Centre and Thuthuzela Care Centre where the child will meet with a disciplinary team for assistance. We offer ongoing counseling”.

Eight participants share the same view such as: “As a social worker you have a counseling session with the child. If the alleged perpetrator is a family member the social worker, will compile a report so as to remove the child from the family to a place of safety. A referral letter is also written requesting the social worker in the place of safety to continue with counseling session until the child recovers. Counseling is needed to restore lack of trust and love towards people.”

“I use early intervention whereby I conduct group work to increase self-awareness, create interaction with others and promote change. I render foster care services and supervision to ensure that foster parents are aware of what is expected from them, their rights and responsibilities”.

From the above statements of the participants it is clear that the social workers do mostly counseling rather than open a case against the perpetrator. If the social worker feels that the child is not safe she/he looks for another foster parent who can take care of the child and the child is in most instances placed in that family while the case is still under investigation. Children’s homes as well as place of safety is the another placement when the social worker does not get a family for the child. Awareness campaigns are also conducted in the communities on child protection services.

In South Africa the researcher experienced that social workers do not always finalize child sexual abuse cases and it appears to be a general process to remove children from their homes when they have been sexually abused rather than starting with forensic assessments and the prosecution of the allege perpetrator (Ntlatleng, 2011:26-27). Social workers remove sexual abused children such as orphans from the home but forget the other children who are still unsafe because the perpetrator is still in the community. According to Segal et al. (2007:170), social workers have an important role in the finalisation of child sexual abuse cases and the prosecution of the alleged perpetrator. In practice, according to the research done by Ntlatleng
(2011:27), social workers experience difficulties in the handling and finalisation of some child sexual abuse cases mostly because of inadequate training.

**THEME 5: EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE ON ORPHANS**

The participants were asked about the effects of sexual abuse on orphans and the answers they gave were as follows:

One participant said: “When the child has grown to the stage where she should have a boyfriend she will be afraid to have a boyfriend or if she has a boyfriend she will not want to be touched by him. Sexual abuse traumatises the child because it is not easy for the child to forget the incident”.

According to two participants “Their performance will be affected at school. They will isolate themselves from other children. Some orphans can be promiscuous or show hatred to men. The orphan can also be affected mentally”.

According to five participants the sexual abused orphan lost focus, has a low self-esteem and in some cases the child become promiscuous because she/he was abused at an early age and if it happened for a long time that child gets used to it and becomes very sexual active. *The child becomes ashamed and does not want to interact with other children. If the child was raped by a man she will not want to see a man in front of her as she will think that the man that she sees will do the same thing that was done by another man to her. Even at school the child does not concentrate, the child thinks about what happened to her*. *The children end up neglecting school, abusing alcohol and being street kids*. Another participant gave the following answer: “You will find out that the child is unable to cope at school or progress well as she used to do. They also are more likely to isolate themselves from their peers. They are more likely to associate themselves with children who are younger than themselves”.

Sometimes children would think that since they were sexually abused by the older person, they may also practice the same to those younger than them, was the answer of one participant and another concluded with “These orphans have a lack of love, lack of trust, anger, anxiety and a low self-esteem”.
Maltz (2002:323) gave a list of the top sexual symptoms that often result from experiences of sexual abuse such as avoiding; fearing or lack interest in sex; approaching sex as an obligation; experiencing negative feelings such as anger, disgust, or guilt with touch; having difficulty becoming aroused or feeling sensation; feeling emotionally distant or not present during sex; experiencing intrusive or disturbing sexual thoughts and images; engaging in compulsive or inappropriate sexual behaviours; experiencing difficulty establishing or maintaining an intimate relationship and experiencing vaginal pain or orgasmic difficulties. According to Spies (2006:53-58) the effects of sexual abuse on a child can be loss and powerlessness; low self-esteem; anger and hostility; guilt and shame; avoidance of intimacy; pseudo-maturity or developmental regression; inappropriate sexual behaviour; self-destructive behaviour and dissociation as well as stealing and lying.

10.2 Phase 2: Document analysis

Document analysis was used in phase two (Strydom & Delport, 2011b:380). Files of the orphans who were sexually abused from the caseloads of the social workers in phase one were used until data saturation were reached. The documents of the orphans were analyzed in the office of the social worker until data saturation were reached.

**TABLE 2: PARTICIPANTS PROFILE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Care giver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maternal aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maternal grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maternal grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maternal aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maternal aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maternal grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maternal grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maternal grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maternal aunt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From these results only two participants were males, four were staying with their maternal aunts and four were ten years and younger. One participant was only five years and another one only eight years. According to Frohlich (2008:362) and Van der Westhuizen et al. (2012:471), most caregivers of orphans are grandmothers. Delport (2007:2) indicates that it is usually grandmothers from the mother’s side.

10.2.1 Circumstances of sexually abused orphans

10.2.1.1 Person who sexually abuse the orphan

- Family members

Participants B, F, G, H, J, K and L were sexually abused by their uncles. Participants A and E were sexually abused by their cousins and participant D by her grandfather. Myers (2011) mentions that children were also said to be sexually abused by uncles, grandfathers, caregiver’s husbands, cousins, neighbours and other perpetrators in kinship and foster care settings. According to Nqaphi (2011:21), most rapes took place indoors such as in the child’s or orphan’s homes. A lesser degree of adult supervision and concern about orphaned child’s wellbeing were significant factors in creating the opportunity for abused and admonished the likelihood that actions would be taken to protect the child. Children who lose a parent often find their new care relationship less supportive, especially in cases where they are always reminded that you are an orphan, you ought to understand you are on your own. According to Becker (2005:130-131), many children in South Africa grew up without a conscientious and thoughtful caregiver. According to the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2005) caregivers, community members and professionals have to report ill treatment of children and orphans to the police officials, commissioners of children’s courts and social workers. It is according to this act that social worker are tasked to monitor and determine whether the best interest of the child is served.
People in the community

Participant C was sexually abused by an unknown man and participant I by the neighbour. According to Robert and Simon (2008:62), rape occurs mostly in the victims’ neighbourhood as Nqaphi (2011:22), also experienced. According to Myers (2011) cited in Nqaphi (2011:22) there is a sense that children who are orphaned may be perceived as ‘easy targets’ to potential perpetrators who realise they may be looked after less closely than other children as they do not have a biological parent to protect them.

10.2.1.2 Places where orphan were sexually abused

At home

Perpetrators sexually abuse children at home. They look when the foster parent is not around home and also when other children are playing outside. These children are groomed by the perpetrators so that they can submit to their acts without crying. The form of sexual abuse happening at home is incest because most of the time you find out that the victim and the perpetrator are blood related. In most cases sexual abuse that occurs at home takes time to be discovered, it takes years because the perpetrator has enough time to sexually groom the victim as he is always around home. According to Fouché and Ysel (2006:249), during the grooming process the child is usually favoured by an adult where games or other things are promised by the perpetrator to build a relationship with the child.

In the bush/forest

In rural areas it is common for children who are at the age of doing house chores to go the forest to fetch fire wood. Perpetrators take chances during that time knowing that children are far from the village where there are old people. Children go to the forest almost every week especially on Saturdays when they are not at school and during school holidays because wood is the source of fire in rural areas. Families depend on fire wood to cook and to make themselves warm. Beauregard et al. (2007:455) noted that child sex offenders often target “a child with family problems, without supervision, always on the street and in need of help”.
In a hut

One of the participants was sexually abused in a hut. The perpetrator took the orphan to a nearby hut which was not being used as the family members were in another province. In most cases houses that have no people living in are usually used by perpetrators to sexually abuse children because they are fully aware that community members know that there is no one in the house and, therefore, no visitations are made (Nqaphi, 2011:22-23).

10.2.1.3 Circumstances that lead to the sexual abuse of the orphan

• Unsupervised by an adult

Nine of the orphans were unsupervised while they were sexually abused. One of the orphan’s grandmothers knew the orphan was sexually abused but she refused to give attention to this because the perpetrator was her son. Parents may not provide adequate supervision for several reasons. They may feel the children can care for themselves. Parents who allow children freedom in walking home from school or playing in the neighbourhood may not even consider the danger of potential abuse or may feel that the children can take care of themselves (Crosson-Tower, 2005:182). Crosson-Tower (2005: 181) further argues that the perpetrator’s ability to molest in an extra familial situation often depends on lack of potential judgement or inadequate parental supervision.

• Grooming by an adult

Three of the orphans were groomed by an adult. Two of the orphans were groomed by their uncles and the other orphan by the neighbour. All three of the respondents were given money by the perpetrator and one also chips. During the grooming process the perpetrator is mostly an adult who mostly appears to be “friendly, trustworthy and non-threatening and the child experiences a degree of favouritism” (Fouché & Yssel, 2006:249). Grooming and bribing of the orphan as victim by the perpetrator happens when the perpetrator gifts they know the child likes or what the caregivers are not able to buy (Gogela, 2013:23). Grooming according to Mitchelle et al. (2012:1) cited in Gogela (2013:23), is actions of the perpetrator deliberately
aimed at establishing an emotional connection and trust with the child in order to increase the likelihood of the child engaging in sexual behaviour.

10.2.1.4. Actions taken regarding the sexual abuse

- Reported to the police

In ten of the sexual abuse cases of the orphans it was reported to the police. Two were not. In one of these two cases the grandmother ignored the matter and protected her son who was the perpetrator. Of these ten cases reported to the police, three perpetrators were out on bail, three are still in jail with one who is serving a life sentence. Three cases are still on and one was dropped due to a lack of evidence. Of the ten cases reported to the police only three were in jail at the time of the research. In research done by Gogela (2013:32), the participants in her research appeared to have lost faith in the system that is supposed to protect them and prosecute the perpetrators. According to the participants in Gogela’s (2013:23), research it is the final results that come from the court that demotivates the caregivers and children to report the sexual abuse “because they do not understand bail especially when they see that the perpetrator is released on bail and is back in the community”.

- Orphan remove to temporary safe care

Of the twelve orphans in this research, eight were removed from their foster homes and put in alternative safe care. Three orphans were removed to Children’s homes, one to an aunt in a nearby village and the others to places of safety. The Children’s Act, 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2005) gives the option to place a child in alternative care when they are being sexually abused. Alternative care is the care of a child placed in foster care, child and youth care centres and temporary safe care (South Africa, 2005).

It appears, according to Ntlatleng (2011:26-27), to be a general process in South Africa to remove children from their homes when they have been sexually abused rather than pursuing the criminal case of the offender. The child is the victim and not the abuser, why removing the child because the problem arises with other children who are still unsafe because the perpetrator is still in the community. In practice,
according to the research done by Ntlatleng (2011-26-27), role players such as the police and social workers experience difficulties in the handling and finalisation of some child sexual abuse cases because of heavy caseloads, inadequate training, the waiting period of DNA results from the laboratory, lack of enough evidence, understaffed role players and the lack of courts that only focus on child sexual abuse cases.

11. RESEARCHER’S OBSERVATION

- **Poverty**
  Poverty is one of the factors that leads orphans to be sexually abused because when there is no one who is taking care of the children in the family, financially the older child ends up looking for other ways of bring food for her siblings. In child headed household the older child drops out of school and takes the role of being a parent to her/his siblings. Orphans end up falling in love with sugar daddies so that they can get money to support their siblings. Others leave their villages to urban areas and they fall into a trap of becoming sex workers when they do not get employed. According to Greco and Dawegert (2007:7), perpetrators of sexual violence deliberately target individuals who will be less likely to report or when they do tell someone, less likely to be believed or deemed credible. People living in poverty are often either ignored or penalized by the larger society. Therefore, poverty often serves to silence and discredit victims/survivors, especially when it is compounded by other forms of oppression and isolation.

- **Substance abuse**
  According to the researcher’s observation in rural areas there is no strict supervision of children. Children usually play outside their family yards and there is no one who monitors them when they are playing. Lack of employment played a role in initiation of taverns in rural areas as people see it as the way of generating money. Due to that it is common to find one or two taverns in a village. Many people are unemployed and they spend their time in taverns using the grant that they receive from the government. Children become victims of sexual abuse to people who abuse substance. Dunn and Keet (2012:175) found in their research that children in
foster care in lower-income families perceive fathers as being absent figures who are mostly unemployed and prone to substance abuse. Circumstances like this impact negatively and can lead to the abuse as well as the sexual abuse of the foster child.

- **Long distances to school**

Long distances traveled by children to school play a role in sexual abuse of children because they pass through the forest to reach school and they go alone when they go to school. Beauregard *et al.* (2007:455) noted that child sex offenders often target “a child with family problems, without supervision, always on the street and in need of help”. Nqaphi (2011) in his research also identified long distances children in rural areas have to walk to school.

- **Failure to disclose**

Orphans do not disclose about sexual abuse due to threats made by the perpetrators, also the lack of love and support from their foster parents causes them to be unable to express their feelings. Lecleclare *et al.* (2009:8) noted that child sex offenders adopt strategies “that are similar to pro-social behaviours which consist of demonstrating love attention and appreciation.

### 12. SUMMARY

- From the data received it has been confirmed that family members, where orphans grew up, fail often to accept and treat them like their own children, especially when they are not sharing the same clan name with the children.
- Orphans are vulnerable to sexual abuse because they do not have in many cases a person to express themselves to in their foster care families. They do not get full support and protection like other children in the family and that makes it even difficult for them to talk freely about their challenges. Lack of knowledge also plays a role as these orphans fail to report to government departments and to community leaders.
- The hope of getting something from the abuser also blinds orphans as they are victims of being groomed for sexual abuse.
The abuse of substances by foster parents has been seen as another cause of orphans to be vulnerable to sexual abuse. Substance abuse has a negative effect on individuals, families, and other support networks. The abuse impairs the abuser's functioning in various ways such as father, mother, community member and employee (Setlalentoa, Ryke & Strydom (2014:349-350).

Other foster family members took advantage of orphans; they mistreat them as they have no parents. In child headed households the oldest child leaves her siblings in search of food and that child becomes a victim of sexual abuse.

Orphans want to survive financially and that causes them to fall in love with a sugar daddy in order to get money. Poverty causes them to go outside and look for financial support also in taverns which is another factor that leads to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans.

The lack of support and parental guidance from foster parents is another factor that contributes to the vulnerability to sexual abuse. When there is a lack of support and love in their foster families, orphans start to misbehave due to frustration.

Loneliness and a lack of acceptance from the foster family, causes orphans to join gangs. They join these gangs because of a need of belonging due to the loss of trust in their foster family members, believing that they will be more accepted and protected in the gang than in the foster family setting. Orphans feel neglected because they do not have parents to take care of their needs. In the gangs there is the misuse of drugs and alcohol that may cause them to be vulnerable to sexual abuse.

When the abuser is the son or family member of the foster parent or the husband who is the bread winner in the family, they tend to protect the one as perpetrator instead of protecting the orphan.

Orphans do not disclose the sexual abuse due to the threats made by the perpetrator and also to the lack of support from their foster parents.

Children such as orphans travel long distances to school in rural areas without an adult to protect them. This situation contributes in many cases to the sexual abuse of these children.

Orphans who were sexually abused often experience difficulties regarding intimacy and physical contact with other people. Specially children in rural areas
because there are no resources available for assisting these children and they do not receive any therapy after they were abused. Physical intimacy or closeness in many cases of the sexual abuse of children such as an orphan reminds them of the context of the abuse (Spies, 2006:56).

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The relevant departments in government as well as non-government organisations should employ more staff and trained members to deal with the sexual abuse of children such as orphans, especially in rural areas. Continuous training of professionals dealing with the sexual abuse of a child is important.

- There is a desperate need for more qualified forensic social workers who can do the forensic assessments with the abused child such as the orphan in order to assure the conviction of the perpetrator.

- Foster parents need to be trained through parenting programmes so that they can get knowledge and understanding of children’s development stages, parenting skills and how to identify sexual abuse of the orphan and how to handle the orphan’s disclosure. They should support the orphan and have a positive relationship with the child by means of communication.

- Community dialogues can also help community members to play a part in coming up with solutions on how to raise orphans.

- Awareness campaigns must be conducted in the communities on child protection services. Early intervention programmes must be implemented whereby the social worker conducts group work to increase self-awareness, create interaction with others and promote change. Social workers also have to render foster care services and supervision to ensure that the foster parents are aware of what is expected from them.

- Close monitoring of foster families to check if the foster children are still happy and also the foster parent still enjoys taking care of the children.
• Family conferences with the foster children and the foster parent when a need arises should be implemented by social workers.

• Foster children also need to be equipped and educated on all forms of abuse so that they can be able to protect themselves.

• Child headed families should be known by community leaders so that they can protect them.

14. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that there are many factors contributing to the vulnerability of orphans to be sexually abused. From the results of this research the researcher came to the conclusion that orphans are more vulnerable towards sexual abuse because they do not always have someone to express themselves to in their foster families. Orphans do not always get the full support and protection like other children in the family and that makes it even more difficult for them to talk freely about their challenges such as the sexual abuse.

Poverty plays a very important role in the vulnerability of orphans being sexually abused. Poverty in the foster family causes the orphan in most of the situations to go and look for financial support in order to survive financially. Situations such as this cause them to fall in love with sugar daddies who in most cases sexually abuse these orphans.

In conclusion, all role players such as the government, non-government organisations, the police, social workers, doctors and community members need to take hands and come up with collective community programmes that acknowledge, support and strengthen the commitment and care of families such as foster care families and households (Richter et al., 2006:10 cited in Roux et al., 2010:44).
15. REFERENCES


Canterbry Christ Church University. 2006. An introduction to ethics and principles in research involving human participants, CCCU.


Date of access: 5 Aug. 2013.


Greeff, M. 2005. Information collected interview. (In de Vos, A.S., Strydom, H.,


Ngubane, S.J. 2010. Gender roles in the African culture: implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS. 


ANNEXURES
ANNEXURE 1: ETHICAL APPROVAL

To whom it may concern

Dear Dr Roux

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

Your request to include the sub-study, entitled "The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area" under the above mentioned umbrella project has been ethically approved.

Yours sincerely,

Minnie Greeff
Ethics Sub-committee Vice Chairperson

File reference: NWU-00027-09-A1

22 November 2013
ANNEXURE 2: PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

Ground Floor - Nqokeni Development center - Private Bag X102 - Riebeeke-Libode area office 9940 - REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: +27 (0) 47 500034 * Tel/Fax: +27 (0) 47 500053 * Email address: pzd.leve@gcsdev.eogs.gov.za Website: www.gcsdev.eogs.gov.za

Enquiries: P.Z. Leve
Date : 29 April 2014

Ref.: Request for conducting research on the research title: The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area

This serves to confirm that Miss N.A. Ncanywa has been granted permission to conduct interviews with Social Development officials based on the research titled the identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area.

Good luck in your studies.

P.Z. Leve - (Nqokeni: Service Office Manager)
F. Nompoozo - (Area Manager)

“Building a caring society, together”
Dear Ms Ncanywa,

YOUR REQUEST TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS IN OUR CENTRE

This serves to inform you that you are permitted to enter the premises and conduct interviews with the selected number of participants.

Your research title: The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area, has impressed us and we hope to get feedback when the study is concluded.

Good luck

Barrington Makunga
Village Director: SOS CV MTHATHA
Title of research project: The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area

CONSENT OF SOCIAL WORKERSTO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

(I am a MA-student in Social Work: Forensic practice from the North-West University researching on factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area and would like to invite you to give consent and participate in my study. My study leader is Dr AA Roux. To follow is information about the study so that you can make an informed decision.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to identify factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area. You are being asked to participate in this study because experiences such as this for a social worker are valuable in order to empower the orphans and their caregivers with knowledge in preventing orphans from being sexually abused.

2. PROCEDURE

If you agree to participate in this study you will be expected to do the following:

- Data will be gathered by means of the files/documents of participants.
- Written permission will be asked from the manager of your organisation to conduct the research after explaining the purpose of the research to them.
- Written permission will also be asked from you as a social worker to conduct an interview with you and also use your documents of particular sexually abused orphans for research purposes.
• This study will focus on the common themes emerging from the interviews with you and the documents of sexually abused orphan.
• Documents of sexually abused orphans from your case load will be included in the research until data saturation has been reached. The researcher has to evaluate all collected data in order to know when saturation has been reached.
• After identifying the commonalities relevant to the research, written permission from the primary caregiver of the orphans as well as assent from the orphans will be obtained by you as the social worker known to them for document analysis.
• After the caregivers and orphans have given written permission you will give the documents to the researcher.
• A date, time and place to do the interviews and document analysis will be discussed with you.
• It will be expected of you to verify the collected data being the social worker who delivers services to these orphans.
• The report will be completed in the format of a mini-dissertation with recommendations for further study.

3. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

Some aspects of your privacy may be lost during this study but your name as well as the names of the caregivers and orphans will never be made known and your data will be handled as confidentially as possible. No individuals’ identifiers will be used in any publications resulting from this study and only the team of researchers will work with the information that you shared. All sensitive information will be protected by locking it up and storing it on a password protected computer.

4. BENEFITS

The benefits from this study will be to supply you and other social workers with data on risk factors that contribute to the sexual abuse of orphans. From this data empowering programmes to the primary caregivers of orphans and orphans can be constructed to prevent the sexual abuse of orphans.

5. COSTS

There will be no cost to you as a result of your participation in this study.
6. PAYMENT
You will receive no payment for participation.

7. QUESTIONS
You are welcome to ask any questions to the researcher before you decide to give consent. You are also welcome to contact me as student or my study leader if you have any further questions concerning your participation in the study.

Cell no: Miss N. A. Ncanywa: 073 836 2218
Cell no: Dr AA Roux: 082 704 3922

8. FEEDBACK OF FINDINGS
The findings of the research will be shared with you as soon as it is available if you are interested. You are welcome to contact us regarding the findings of the research.

..........................
Miss N. A. Ncanywa
MA student: Social Work: Forensic Practice

..........................
Dr Adrie Roux
Study Leader
CONSENT FORM

Research title: The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area

CONSENT OF SOCIAL WORKERS

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY.

You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw at any point even after you have signed the form to give consent, without any consequences.

Should you be willing to participate you are requested to sign below:

I ________________________________________ hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the above mentioned study. I am not coerced in any way to participate and I understand that I can withdraw at any time should I feel uncomfortable during the study. I also understand that my name will not be disclosed to anybody who is not part of the study and that the information will be kept confidential and not linked to my name at any stage. I also understand that I might benefit from participation in this project and am aware of the possible risks. Should I need further discussions someone will be available to assist me.

____________________
Signature of participant

____________________
Signature of the person obtaining

____________________
Date

____________________
Date
ANNEXURE 5: CONSENT FROM THE CAREGIVER OF THE ORPHAN

Research title: The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY.

You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw at any point even after you have signed the form to give consent, without any consequences.

Should you be willing that the files of the orphans may be used in this research you are requested to sign below:

I ______________________________________ hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the above mentioned study. I am not coerced in any way to participate and I understand that I can withdraw at any time should I feel uncomfortable during the study. I also understand that any name will be disclosed to anybody who is not part of the study and that the information will be kept confidential and not linked to any name at any stage. I also understand that I and the orphan might benefit from participation in this project and am aware of the possible risks. Should I need further discussions someone will be available to assist me.

________________________  __________________________
Signature of participant        Date

________________________  __________________________
Signature of the person obtaining        Date
ANNEXURE 6: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH SOCIAL WORKERS

Research title: The identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area

INTRODUCTION
- The social worker is launching a research project on identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability to sexual abuse of orphans in a rural area.
- The research project is of importance in coming up with solutions that can eliminate the prevalence of sexual abuse to orphans.
- The results obtained from this research project will also be used to identify shortfalls in the service delivery of the Department of Social Development in the O.R. Tambo district.
- The results of this research project will be used for empowering orphans and their caregivers with knowledge in preventing orphans from being sexually abused.
- Thank you for your friendly co-operation, inputs and time. Your opinion is of great value.

Please answer the following questions with honesty and to the fullest. There is no right or wrong answers.

SECTION A: IDENTIFICATION PARTICULARS:
1. Age
2. Gender

SECTION B: SEXUAL ABUSE OF ORPHANS
3. Please give a detailed explanation of your experience as a social worker with sexually abused orphans.
4. What according to you are the factors that contribute to the vulnerability for sexual abuse of orphans?
5. What should be done to ensure the protection of children in foster families from sexual abuse?
6. What services do you render to sexual abused orphans?
7. What services can be rendered to orphans to protect them from sexual abuse?
8. What are the effects of sexual abuse to orphans?
Thank you for your participation.

Researcher: Miss N.A. Ncanywa
Master Student in Social Work: Forensic Practice
Social Worker: Department of Social Development & Special Programmes: Eastern Cape
Dr. C Wessels

ETHICS APPROVAL OF PROJECT

The North-West University Ethics Committee (NWU-EC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-EC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

### Project title
The development and evaluation of programs and a protocol in Forensic Social Work

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<td>Institution</td>
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**Status:** S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

**Approval date:** 12 August 2009  
**Expiry date:** 11 August 2014  
Extended to June 2015

Special conditions of the approval (if any): None
General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-EC:
  - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project,
  - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.

- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the NWU-EC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.

- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-EC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.

- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-EC retains the right to:
  - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
    - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
    - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-EC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
    - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
    - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The Ethics Committee would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Committee for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof Amanda Lourens
(Chair NWU Ethics Committee)