A STUDY ON THE FACTORS AFFECTING ORPHANED AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN (OVC) IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR, THE CASE OF HARTZELL HIGH SCHOOL IN MUTARE

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Abstract

The study focused on the factors affecting orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) in the education sector, the case of Hartzell High School in Mutare. The research comes under the background that orphaned children are facing challenges that are affecting their education resulting in school low performance, absenteeism and school drop outs. The objectives of the study were achieved since the researcher was able to get a deeper and subjective understanding of the challenges being faced by OVC in education. The researcher also managed to highlight the initiatives being taken by OVC to achieve their educational goals.

Case study was used as the research design. The qualitative approach was used to gather information about factors affecting OVC in education. The targeted population was children below the age of 18 at Hartzell High School who have lost one or both parents and teachers at the school. The interviews were effective since the researcher was able to get first hand information from the primary sources concerning the factors affecting OVC in the education. The questionnaires were also distributed to the OVC at the school and it was effective since the researcher managed to get a clear picture of the factors affecting OVC in education. Observation also led the researcher to get first hand information since she observed the respondents in their natural setting. Through the research, the researcher found out that orphaned children are facing challenges that are affecting their education. These include lack of school fees and stationery, hunger, loneliness and stigma and discrimination. All of the orphaned children find it difficult to concentrate in school as a result of these challenges. The study revealed that there are various initiatives that some of the orphaned children take to be successful in school. The government has introduced various strategies aimed at ensuring that OVC access education. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Faith Based Organization (FBOs) are also contributing towards educational assistance for OVC. However, it has been noted that OVC still face a number of challenges in education regardless of the part being played by the government and other organizations in providing educational assistance to OVC. Hence there is need for the government and the organizations providing support to OVC to adopt a developmental approach in assisting them through promoting livelihood sustainable projects to OVC and their immediate families.