

ABSTRACT

Poverty, rapid urbanization, population growth rate, family instability and the declining role of the extended family system are among the key factors responsible for the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in Nairobi. In this state of flux, cases of children who have been battered, abandoned, abused and neglected by their families or displaced as a result of armed conflict in the region have increased at an astounding pace over the past several years. One out of every three children from poor urban families in Kenya is regularly battered or subjected to other forms of maltreatment by a parent or other family members, the public and the authorities. Basically, there are two levels of abuse and neglect. There is abuse and neglect which children experience at home and which drives them onto the streets. There is also abuse and neglect which street children endure while on the streets. This paper discusses some of the ways in which abuse and neglect affect the lives of street children and families. It also highlights the plight of a sample of street children as exemplified by the kinds of difficulties which they endure while on the street.